

IRAN AND INDIA  
THROUGH THE AGES

# IRAN AND INDIA THROUGH THE AGES

BY

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To all  
who by thought, word and deed  
love humanity  
as they do their creed, community and country  
this volume is  
most cordially  
dedicated



## PREFACE

THE subject of Iran and India has ever been invested with a perennial charm. During its long and chequered history Iran tasted in ample measure the sweets and bitters of fortune. It came into contact, through victory and defeat, with various countries and races, assimilated all that it considered essential for its own growth, and bequeathed a rich legacy not only to its own progeny but to all nations with which it was intimately associated. But there is no nation with which Iran is so vitally connected as it is with India, to which since pre-historic times it has been allied by racial, religious, political and cultural affinities. Iran's indebtedness to and influence on other nations have been discussed at length by the present writer in his previous work *Iran and its Culture*, of which Chapter VII deals in particular with "Iran and India". This Chapter is the matrix of the present work, which by intensive study of this absorbing subject, has here expanded into an independent volume.

Even before the dawn of definitely recorded history one can trace the intimate connection between the Iranians and the ancestors of the present-day Hindus, who once lived together as an important branch of the Aryan family and enjoyed a basic identity of race, religion, language, customs and culture in general. But after generations of amicable co-existence they happened to be divided by disagreements on religious matters, and a large group concluded the dispute by coming down and settling near the river Sindhu or Indu, from which they were known subsequently as the Hindus. The story of their previous life in Iran in the

"Indo-Iranian Age" has been discussed in Chapter I of the present work.

India has figured in Iranian works, but Iran appears more frequently in Indian myth and legend, poetry, drama and fiction. The historical connection of Iran and India begins with the conquest of the Panjab and Sindh by Darius Hystaspes in 512 B.C. From this year began the long and uninterrupted association between Iran and India in various spheres of life, and it will be found to continue till the present day. Chapter II traces this connection upto the Arabian Conquest of Iran in A.D. 651. This date is convenient from the Iranian point of view as a landmark indicating the fall of Zarathushtrian Iran and the rise of Islamic power. It is also an epoch-making event in the annals of India, as A.D. 648 has unanimously been determined not only as the end of the reign of king Harsha of Kanouj but also as the termination of the age known as Ancient Indian History.

The Parsis are a living link of unity between Iran and India, for the twin brothers who had separated in the Indo-Iranian age were destined to meet again, though under distressing circumstances. The story of the exodus of a group of Iranians after the calamitous downfall of their motherland, and various other problems connected therewith, form the subject of Chapter III of this work.

The fourth and last chapter is longer than the three preceding ones put together, and deals with the post-Islamic contacts between the two countries. Victories and defeats lead to conquests and emigrations and thus bring countries undesignedly into contact with their neighbours or even with more distant nations in no way connected with the belligerents. Iran lost very heavily by the Arab conquest but its connection with India was all the more intensified as the Iranian Muslims spread out in every direction,

especially when inspired by motives of conquest, commerce or culture. Hārūn ar rāshid and especially his son Māmūn, the greatest of 'Abbāsīde Khalīfs, were smitten with a passion for knowledge, and thus began the Renaissance of Learning in Iran with the famous city of Baghdād as its capital. The next landmark, discussed in this Chapter, is the illustrious and tolerant scholar Albiruni, an institution in himself and the greatest of unaccredited ambassadors dispatched by Iran to India. Amir Khusru is the next noteworthy figure, a veritable genius, who ploughed in many fields and gleaned an abundant harvest. In him could be traced the beginning of India's composite culture, for he could effectively interpret the thought of the Hindus to the Muslims and *vice versa*.

Several important incidents in history have clustered round about the year 1500: the discovery of America by Columbus (1492), the opening out of the sea-route to India by Vasco de Gama (1498), Luther's protest against the Pope embodied in his 95 theses, nailed to the church-door at Wittenberg (1517); the commencement of the Safavi rule and dominance of the Shi'a faith in Iran under Shah Isma'il (1499), and the foundation in 1526 by Bābar of the dynasty of the Great Mughals, the munificent patrons of art and learning, who inaugurated the golden age of Indo-Iranian cultural relations. Chapter IV is largely taken up by the influence exerted by Iran on India, which during Muslim rule adopted Persian as the language of culture and refinement for the upper classes. Iranian influence is also evident on the growth of Urdu, once the *patois* of the masses, on the spread of Sufism, on the dissemination of Indo-Persian literature, and on the architecture, painting, calligraphy, music and the minor arts and industries of India. The Chapter also refers to Iranian worthies who rendered distinguished services to India or helped to main-

tain the intellectual ties between the two countries. This Chapter refers only to the prominent instances of cultural contact between the two countries. By and large the matter dealt with herein is selective rather than exhaustive, and detailed information on every one of the points touched in this Chapter will be found to be available in the numerous books on the subjects.

The conciliation brought about between two countries by political pacts and cleverly-worded negotiations has often proved to be a hollow and temporary relief: a far more abiding harmony can be achieved by a cultural approach when the two nations endeavour to understand and appreciate the inner life of each as revealed in its literary and artistic productions. In the case of individuals love may be a spontaneous outburst, freely bestowed by one on another even without any knowledge of the object of affection: but nations are slow in their attachment to one another till at first they are stirred into emotional activity by adequate knowledge. Without knowledge love cannot function effectively: without love mere knowledge is not only a useless encumbrance but sometimes a potent cause of mischief. A noble life or a country actuated by lofty aspirations yearns for universal love, directed by the necessary knowledge. Romain Rolland, who had made a deep study of India's spiritual heritage, once wrote to R. Tagore: "India from now on is not a foreign land: . . . I find her again deep inside me." If one modern nation were to know another as thoroughly as this sympathetic French scholar knew India, warfare would soon be an ugly nightmare of the past, heterogeneity would yield place to homogeneity, and all sense of foreignism would be substituted by familiarity. It is clear therefore that the most ideal exports and imports between countries are their cultural achievements, the unfailing harbingers of harmony and peace.

However different be the paths that Iran and India have chosen to follow in the field of foreign policy at the present day, the two countries will be seen to be intimately connected in various other walks of life. Commendable attempts have been made in India to revive and strengthen the cultural ties with Iran by the establishment of various institutions in great cities like Delhi, Bombay and Calcutta, and Iran has responded with its usual warmth and cordiality by sending cultural missions to India with a view to cultivating further intellectual contacts and thereby achieving the intended goal of international harmony. World-peace also must thus be secured through osmosis and absorption of cultures. The present writer, though conscious of his limitations, has been inspired by the same ideal: he attempts to convey knowledge not so much for its own sake but in the hope that it may prove the precursor of love and unite both countries, already at one in various spheres of life since the twilight of history, in the steadfast bonds of an abiding peace.

But aspirations cannot be left to flourish in the region of idealism but have to be rooted in the soil of realism for their materialization. The pursuit of this aim is often achieved with the aid either of our philanthropic magnates or our sponsoring and appreciative academics—the latter alternative alone being applicable in the present case. A happy duty consequently devolves upon the author, who hereby acknowledges his sense of gratitude to the authorities of the Gujarat University for the generous grant of Rs. 1000 bestowed by them towards the publication of this work and the realization of this hope.

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*Tu ai āb o ai bād o ai kuh o khāk,*  
*Ze mā gui bidrud bar mām i fāk:*  
*Bagu nām i nik i tu fāyandeh bād,*  
*Dil i mā ze riehr i tu fābandeh bād:*  
*Maranj ar ze tu rui barfāsteem,*  
*Sui kishwar i Hind bishtāsteem:*  
*Sipās o dard i tu dāreem fās,*  
*Turā rik khāheem o hudeh shanās:*  
*Dayād i tu yak shu'leh raushan kuneem,*  
*Banām i tu yak gusheh gulshan kuneem.*

Oh water and wind, mountain and earth, bid  
 farewell from us to our sacred Mother (Iran). Say to  
 her: "May thy noble name endure for ever: may  
 our hearts be ever illuminated by thy love. Grieve  
 not that we are now turning our faces from thee  
 and hastening to the land of India. We express  
 our thanksgiving and bid thee adieu: we wish thee  
 well and acknowledge our fealty to thee. We  
 shall install a flame (raise a fire-temple) in thy  
 memory, and in thy name we shall transform  
 a corner (of India) into a rose-garden."

(From Pour i Dāood's poem on  
 the emigration of the Iranians to  
 India)

# IRAN AND INDIA THROUGH THE AGES



## THE INDO-IRANIAN AGE

IN the dim distant past when history melted into myth, prose into poetry, reality into romance, we have glimmerings of the origin of a fair-complexioned and virile race, known as the Aryans (literally, noble people), who were supposed by many scholars to have dwelt somewhere in Central Asia, though 'Tilak' enunciated the ingenious theory of their settlement at the North Pole. The oldest Aryan stock, of which we hold record, albeit largely inferential, is known as the Indo-European group. Even archaeology has not yet been able to penetrate the nebulous light of its hoary antiquity, and in the absence of all historical data we are left fumbling for facts and the possible era of its existence. The Indo-Europeans must have lived together as a nation, speaking the same language and following the same customs, till for various reasons they were driven in different directions in search of fresh woods and pastures new. Some were impelled to do so by a spirit of adventure: difference of opinion might have led to splits, but the main cause of these migrations must have been over-population; and the sheer necessity of securing *lebensraum* must have led many of them to exchange their native lands for other countries. Large numbers might well be supposed to have departed to the North and settled in Europe, where they became ancestors of the present day European races.

In the absence of history language affords us an infallible test to establish the relationship of these European Aryans with the rest of their brethren, who in course of

time migrated to Iran and still later to India. The languages that developed among the Iranian and Indian Aryans were respectively known as Avesta and Sanskrit, and philology has helped us to realize that some of the best known European and Asiatic languages belong to the same Aryan stock. The Latin word for fire is *ignis* which is the same as the Avestan *ātar* and the Sanskrit *agni*: the Greek word for dawn is *Eos*, which corresponds to the Avestan *Ushah* and the Vedic *Ushas*: the word for god in the West is *deus*, which is *deva* in the East Aryan languages. The English word bogey illustrates how words can be degraded in their significance, for it is probably traceable to *bagha* in the Avesta and *bhaga* in the Vedas, both meaning the gracious Lord and protector. Gods like Varuṇa and Dyāus in the *R̥g Veda* correspond to Uranos and Zeus respectively in the Greek pantheon, proving the identity of the deities once worshipped by the Aryans before their divisions into various communities. The marked resemblance between East Aryan words like *pitrū* (father), *mātrū* (mother), *bhrātrū* (brother), *duhitā* (daughter), etc. and their counterparts in the various Western languages also reveals the existence of a common language once spoken by our ancestors—the Indo-Europeans.

But we are here concerned not with those ancient Aryans who departed to Europe but with the group that settled in Aērānvaejo (Iran), particularly on the Eastern side of the country. They are known as the Indo-Iranians, the ancestors of the present day Hindus and Iranians. The great split among the Indo-Iranians, which led to the subsequent formation of the two wellknown religious groups, the Zarathushtrians who stayed on in Iran, and the Hindus who penetrated to the South and settled in the Punjab, will be described towards the end of this chapter. The Indo-Iranians lived for a long time in

Aērānvaejo as one race speaking the same language (bifurcated at a later stage into Avesta and Sanskrit), following the same religion (broken up into Zarathushtrianism and Hinduism during and after the great split), and adopting the same customs (whose resemblance, even when practised by the Zarathushtrians and Hindus of the present day, is conspicuous). The Indo-Iranian religion is defunct, but we can form an idea of that age, the people, their religion and customs from a comparative study of Zarathushtrianism and Hinduism, the two extant daughters of the ancient Indo-Iranian faith.

To begin with there is the closest resemblance between the Avestan and the Vedic Sanskrit languages in which are respectively embodied the ancient Zarathushtrian and Hindu scriptures. There was a time when a few Western scholars absurdly believed Sanskrit to be a forgery of the Brahmins, while others, who knew no better, condemned the Avesta as the fabricated product of Parsi priests. The rise of the science of philology and the researches made therein by scholars of repute soon dissipated the darkness created by these groundless theories, and it has now been ascertained that both the Avestan and Vedic Sanskrit are sister-languages, astonishingly similar in vocabulary, grammar, syntax and metre. So close is the resemblance that a passage could be read in both languages in parallel columns with minor alterations, as we can read one and the same passage in Gujarati, Hindi, Marathi or Bengali with the necessary but slightest possible changes. Nay, it would be an understatement of the truth to maintain that the resemblance between Avestan and Vedic Sanskrit is similar to that between Gujarati and Marathi. It would rather be nearer the truth to hold that the resemblance between Avestan and Vedic Sanskrit is like that between sub-divisions of the same language, e. g. pure Gujarati

as compared with Parsi Gujarati or Kathiawari Gujarati. In fact the language is the same, the difference only arising in its use by two different sections of the Aryan people, living in two different countries in the course of centuries after the great split. Scholars have even gone further and asserted that there is greater resemblance between Avestan and Vedic Sanskrit than there is between Vedic and classical Sanskrit itself. Dr. I.J.S. Taraporewala<sup>2</sup> observes that in translating the *Gāthās* he compared Avestan words, idioms and ideas with the Vedic Sanskrit at every step, and held it "utterly wrong to read the ideas of later Zarathushtrian theology into the *Gāthās*". So obvious is the resemblance between the Avestan and Vedic Sanskrit that any attempt at illustrating the self-evident may well be considered superfluous.

From the resemblance in languages we pass on to that between the Zarathushtrian and Vedic religions. The references quoted here on the Hindu side will be confined exclusively to the *R̥g Veda*, which is the oldest of Hindu scriptures. The other three Vedas are not laid under contribution, for they are largely constituted of verses from the *R̥g Veda*, the matrix of the Hindu religion. It is however necessary at the outset to account for the differences, which inevitably arose between the Zarathushtrians and Hindus as they settled in two different countries with different environments and associations. In their religions at the earliest stage animistic nature-worship played a leading part, but it led the Vedic Hindus to polytheistic adoration of forces of nature, though stray gleams of monotheism appear in the *R̥g Veda*, for instance, in the celebrated verse I 164,46, which has long been regarded as the *locus classicus* in the subject: "The Reality is one, though the learned know it by various names". Monotheism among the

Hindus was developed not in the times of the *R̥g Veda* but in the later Upanishadic age. But according to Zarathushtrian scriptures, centuries before Zarathushtra Iran was known to be a monotheistic country, the Iranian faith, propagated by inspired teachers even before the Prophet of Iran, being called the Mazdayasni or God-worshipping faith. The Pishdādian and Kayānian people, immortalized in the *Shāhnāmah* of Firdausi, were staunch believers in the one God, though it is possible that there were times of religious lukewarmness and occasional lapses into nature-worship, which necessitated the divine mission of nine great apostles in Iran even before Zarathushtra, who in the *Gāthās* proclaimed the uncompromising unity of God by banishing the various nature-deities from the faith.

But strict monotheism is hard to establish and harder still to maintain as seen in the history of various religions like Judaism, for there is often a tendency in people to slip into polytheistic worship of deities and forces other than the Almighty. Zarathushtrianism never degenerated into actual polytheism, but it must be admitted that the deities banished by Zarathushtra from the Indo-Iranian religion returned after his death in his faith, not indeed in the form of deities but as angels, some of whom threatened to be rivals rather than the helpmates of Ahura Mazda. These forces of nature, that returned to the Zarathushtrian faith at a later stage when priesthood was evidently predominant, are to be found in the *Yashts* (called the Younger *Avesta*) and they bear a close resemblance to the Vedic deities. This intimate likeness, which we propose to trace and examine in this chapter, will serve to show the nature of the deities worshipped by the Indo-Iranians before the great split, dividing them into two separate faiths.

The supreme god of the Indo-Iranians, the very embodiment of righteousness and the moral law, was Varuṇa, whose greatness is referred to in the *R̥g Veda* I 24; 14 and I 128; 7, and his wisdom in I 25; 10 and VIII 42; 2. The Vedic poets, says Z. A. Ragozin<sup>3</sup>, came nearest to monotheism in their conception of Varuṇa, who has been called Asura (spiritual) in the *R̥g Veda*, for instance in I 24; 14, before that word assumed its modern degraded significance, as will be seen later. Originally Varuṇa (from *vru* to cover) was the all-embracing sky-god, and then the one great God, the personification of all the noblest virtues like *R̥ta* (righteousness), mercy, grace and forgiveness. This Supreme God of the *R̥g Veda* Asura Varuṇa is the Vedic counterpart of the Ahura Mazda of the Zarathushtrians. Varuṇa is the 44th of the 101 names of Ahura Mazda and means "preserver from evil". After the great split, however, Varuṇa was dethroned from his place of pride by the Hindus who assigned the ascendancy to Indra (*R̥g Veda* X 124; 4). As Griswold<sup>4</sup> observes, it is the tragedy of the *R̥g Veda* that Varuṇa should thus be dethroned from his lofty ethical pedestal to the inferior position of a petty godling of waters, divested of his moral significance (*R̥g Veda* VII 34; 10-11). It was after the great split that Asura came to be deliberately invested with the vicious significance it now bears, for instance, in *R̥g Veda* X 53; 4. The Zarathushtrians retaliated, for in their later scriptures *Bundehishn* XXVIII 9 and *Dādasfān i Dini* XXXVI 23, 89 and 120 and XCII 31, Varuṇa is used in a disparaging sense as typifying selfishness, misdirection and lust.

We have seen that after the great schism Varuṇa was replaced by Indra, the most powerful of Vedic deities, to whom is devoted the largest number of hymns in the *R̥g Veda*. Indra is described as consuming large quantities

of the *Soma* juice (*R̥g Veda* VIII 6, 36 and VIII 50, 1), a miraculously efficacious beverage, much in demand in the Indo-Iranian age, as will be described subsequently. In India the rains are usually welcomed and droughts invariably dreaded, and Indra was therefore associated with rain. With abundant *Soma* libations Indra was implored to fight against and destroy the demon of drought *Vritra* (*R̥g Veda* VIII 17, 9 and VIII 78, 3-5), as *Tishtriya*, the angel of rain, strove against *Apaosha*, the demon of drought in the *Avesta* (*Yasht* VIII 26-29). Indra was consequently called *Vritrahana* (*Verethraghna* in the *Avesta*) or slayer of *Vritra*. When *Asura Varuṇa* (*Ahura Mazda* of the Iranians) was degraded in the *R̥g Veda*, his rival god Indra naturally became a lieutenant of the Devil in the Zarathushtrian faith. With other demons "*Indar*" (as he is known in Zarathushtrian scriptures) is denounced in the *Vendidad* X 9 and XIX 43. The main function of this enemy of righteousness, as recorded in the *Bundehishn* XXVIII 3, is to mislead people from the path of virtue and dissuade them from putting on the *Sudreḥ* and *Kushti* (sacred shirt and girdle). According to the *Bundehishn* XXX 11, *Indar* (Indra) will be finally overwhelmed by *Ardibehesht*, who stands for righteousness.

Probably the earliest object of adoration in the ancient world was the "shining sun", known in the *Avesta* as the *Hvar-kshaeta*, which was subsequently transformed into the modern *Khurshid*. The Sanskrit equivalent for *Hvar* (sun) was *Svar* (*Surya* or *Savitar*). This greatest and most life-giving of heavenly bodies claimed the fervent homage of the Indo-Iranian people, as seen in the prayers offered to *Khurshid* and *Meher* (Persian equivalents of the sun) in the Zarathushtrian faith, and to *Savitar* (the sun) in the *Gāyatri Mantra* (*R̥g Veda* III 62; 10), which is as sacred among the Hindus as the *Ahunavar mantra* is among the

Parsis. Both in the Veda and the Avesta the sun is described as the eye of God (*R̥g Veda* I 50, 6 and *Yasna* I 11): both scriptures refer to the sun as having swift and powerful horses (*R̥g Veda* I 115, 3 and *Yasna* I 11 and the *Kharshid Njāish*).

Mention must also be made of another well-known deity, associated with the sun, viz. Mitra of the *R̥g Veda* and Mithra of Zarathushtrianism. If *Hvar* is the sun as it exists in nature, Mithra may be taken as its beneficent, life-giving light and as an embodiment of the noblest virtues. Varuṇa was originally a sky-god, and hence he often appears in combination with Mitra in the *R̥g Veda* as a dual divinity (*R̥g Veda* I 153), as Ahura-Mithra is referred to in Zarathushtrian scriptures (*Yasna* II 11 and *Yasht* X 113). The Vedic Mithra's eyes are said to be ever watchful, while Mithra in Zarathushtrianism is endowed with a thousand ears and ten thousand eyes. In the Indo-Iranian pantheon, as gathered from the Avesta and Sanskrit texts, Mithra is celebrated for his strength, wisdom and power to protect the living creation. On the whole far greater attention has been paid to him as champion of truth and justice, guardian of contracts, angel of war and bestower of victory in Zarathushtrianism than in the *R̥g Veda*, where only one hymn (III 59) is exclusively dedicated to him, though several to Mitra-Varuṇa. In subsequent ages Mithra-worship passed on from Iran to Rome, and the Mithraic cult became the most powerful rival of Christianity, by which it was finally displaced under the Emperor Constantine. But, it may be noted, the central figure of the faith was originally an Indo-Iranian god Mitra or Mithra, who appears both in the *R̥g Veda* and the *Avesta*.

If Varuṇa was the supreme, Indra the mightiest and Surya the most familiar, Agni (fire) remains the most



popular among the deities in the Indo-Iranian pantheon. As in most religions, Ahura Mazda is conceived as eternal light which is symbolized in the Zarathushtrian faith by *Ātar* (fire). Even to day a very prominent place is assigned in this religion to fire, which is symbolically called the son of Ahura Mazda in *Ātash Nyūish*, as Agni is said to be the offspring of the Supreme Lord in the *R̥g Veda* III 29,14. Agni is also regarded in the *R̥g Veda* as the priest of God (I 1,1) and also as His messenger (I 12,1), and hardly any Hindu religious ceremony can be performed without his inspiring presence. In fact the *R̥g Veda* begins with a hymn devoted to the praise of Agni. Second in importance to Indra is Agni and more than two hundred hymns celebrate his glory in the *R̥g Veda*. Agni figured as a very important Indo-European god of hoary antiquity. Zarathushtra did not invent fire-worship, but realizing its undisputed power and consequence in his own times, continued it in the *Gāthās*, thereby leaving the position and predominance of Agni in his reformed faith as undimmed as it was centuries before him (*Yasna* XXXI 3 and XXXIV 4). The greatest and most comprehensive of Zarathushtrian virtues is *Asha* (righteousness or the Moral Law), and the importance of *Ātar* (fire) may be judged from the fact that in the Zarathushtrian scriptures *Ātar* is regarded as the visible symbol of righteousness as Agni in the *R̥g Veda* I 1,8 is described as the "guard of Law Eternal."

A subordinate angel connected with *Ātar* is *Nairyosangha* (*Yasna* XVII 11), who in his functions corresponds to the Vedic *Narashamsa*, "the household priest of heaven," referred to in the *R̥g Veda* I 18, 9 and the *Vendidad* XIX 34.

The adoration of waters is also common to both the Iranian and Hindu religions, and must have been a main feature of the Indo-Iranian faith. The female Yazata or angel of waters in Zarathushtrianism is *Ardivisura*, known

as Anāhita or unpolluted. Ardivisura is also the name of a mythical river flowing in the celestial regions (*Yasht* V 85, 88). Like Mithra-worship, the cult of Anāhita also spread in foreign countries and was mixed up with those of Ishtar, Aphrodite, Athene etc. According to Berosus, the Babylonian historian, Artaxerxes II (known as Mnemon) had lapsed into idolatry and initiated the worship of Anāhita and Mithra in his kingdom. Ardivisura is the presiding genius of Zarathushtrian women, on whom she bestows fertility and easy childbirth (*Yasna* LXV 2 and *Yasht* V 2). It would not be easy to find from the *R̥g Veda* a deity analogous in his or her functions to Ardivisura. S. K. Hodiwala<sup>5</sup>, however, compares the Iranian Ardivisura with Saraswati, a river in the Punjab, now no longer in existence. Like the Ardivisura, the Vedic Saraswati also appears to have a celestial origin; she also presided over the destinies and particularly the pregnancy of women and was worshipped by gods like Indra (*R̥g Veda* V 43, 11 and X 184, 2). It was only at a later stage that Saraswati ceased to be a river and was identified with speech and worshipped as the goddess of knowledge.

Another Indo-Iranian deity of waters is the Avestan and Vedic Apām Napāt, literally the offspring of waters (*Yasht* VIII 34 and *R̥g Veda* II 35). As Ardivisura had both a heavenly and earthly existence, so too was Apām Napāt the offspring of heaven and earth. Like its Vedic counterpart and namesake, Apām Napāt, as Dastur Dr. Dhalla<sup>6</sup> observes, has both an igneous and an aqueous nature. His igneous nature is evidenced in his association with the fire-angel Nairyosangha; at the same time he co-operates with Vāyu (wind), thus distributing waters on the earth. In the *R̥g Veda* Apām Napāt is adored by females (*R̥g Veda* II 35, 4-5); in the younger *Avesta* he is referred to as the lord of females (*Yasht* V 72).

One of the most charming of deities from Indo-Iranian times is the Avestan Ushah, who is identical with the Vedic Ushas or Ushā, the goddess of the dawn. The hymns in her praise in the *R̥g Veda* are only about twenty in all, but they constitute the most fascinating lyric poetry in that work. Like the sun, Ushas is also borne in a brilliant chariot, drawn by gold-coloured steeds (*R̥g Veda* VII 75, 6, and VII 78, 4; *Yasht* V 6 and the Ushahina Gāh). The description of Ushah in Avestan literature is very meagre. Ushah is assisted by her own counterpart Ushahina, the male personification of the dawn in Zarthushtrian scriptures. This Ushahina is the name of the fifth and last *gāh* or period of the day, ending with the dawn, as well as of the prayers associated with that time.

Vāyu or Vāta, the genius of the wind in the *R̥g Veda* and the *Avesta* respectively, is another important deity that figures in the Indo-Iranian pantheon. He is known by nearly forty seven names in the *Avesta*. He is immensely powerful and speedy, and in Hindu mythology is the father of Hanumān and Bhima, who are both proverbial for the strength and speed they inherited from their sire. Vāta in the *Avesta* is however capable of both good and evil, his harmful aspects being branded as wicked and classed in the *Avesta* among the creations of Angra Mainyu (*Yasna* XXII 24; *Yasht* XV 5). In the *R̥g Veda* the Māruts are personifications of storms and cyclones.

The Vedic Ashwins are the twin deities (comparable to the Dioscurides or Castor and Pollux of Greek mythology) who are the harbingers of the dawn (*R̥g Veda* VII: hymns 67 to 74; and VIII: hymn 35). According to S. K. Hodiwala<sup>7</sup>, they correspond to the Avestan Aspinas, and both mean "possessing horses", which creatures, as observed above, are invariably associated with the chariot of the sun and evidently typify his resplendent

rays. The Ashwins are usually known by their epithet Nāsatyas (*R̥g Veda* VII 70, 6 and VII 71, 4), analogous to the Avestan Nāonghāithya. But though the Aspinā stars retain their original position in the *Avesta*, their attribute Nāonghāithya has been degraded, as were Varuṇa and Indra, and has now come to be regarded, as a demon, for instance, in the *Vendidad* X 9 and XIX 43. In the Pahlavi age Nāonghāithya is indentified with Taromat (*Bundehishn* XXX 11), the demon who withers the devotional impulse in man.

The identity between the Vedic and Iranian deities was established by an important archaeological find<sup>1</sup> by the German Professor, Hugo Winckler, who in 1907 discovered at Boghaz-Koi in North Eastern Asia Minor some cuneiform tablets, being a record of treaties between the kings of Mitani and of the Hittites, concluded about 1400 B. C. Among the deities invoked to witness on the occasion are some who were common in part to India and Persia. They were Mi-it-ra, U-ru-w-na, In-da-ra and Na-sa-at-ti-ia, corresponding respectively to Mitra, Varuṇa, Indra and Nāsatya. This conclusively shows that these four gods were at one time worshipped in common by the ancestors of the Vedic and Iranian people.

We may now turn to a female deified conception, Ārmaiti, called Spentā Ārmaiti in the *Avesta* and Spendārmad in the later Pahlavi age. She is regarded as an Ameshā Spentā or archangel and the *Gāthās* resound with her praise. She typifies devotion and is conceived to be the daughter of Ahura Mazda (*Yasna* XLV 4). Zarathushtra always longs in the *Gāthās* to be united with Ahura Mazda through pious devotion (*Yasna* XLIV 11), and Ārmaiti, with other virtues, is said to further the imperishable Kingdom of Ahura Mazda (*Yasna* XXVIII 3). The Vedic counterpart of Ārmaiti is Aramati who also personi-

fies devotion (*Rg Veda* V 43, 6 and VII 42, 3). According to the *Gāthās* (*Yasna* XLIV 6) *Ārmaiti* strengthens the cause of Asha or righteousness; so too, as Dastur Dr. Dhalla<sup>9</sup> points out, *Ārmaiti* is linked with *Rta*—a blending of devotion with righteousness or the moral order (*Rg Veda* V 43, 6). In the later *Avesta*, *Ārmaiti* typifies the genius of the earth and then the earth itself, rejoicing when waste land is cultivated (*Yasna* XVI 10 and *Vendidad* III 34). Even this aspect of *Ārmaiti* as the earth has its parallel in the *Vedas*, wherein, as S. K. Hodiwala<sup>10</sup> has pointed out, the mighty *Aramati* was said to have been submerged under the floods (*Rg Veda* X 92, 5), and in this connection the word *Aramati* can apparently signify only the earth.

The last Indo-Iranian deity that may be mentioned is *Airyaman* (the Vedic *Aryaman*, one of the *Ādityas* or sons of the Infinite Mother), associated with *Mitra* and *Varuṇa* (*Rg Veda* I 136, 2). Dr. C. I. Tiele<sup>11</sup> takes *Aryaman* to mean the guardian genius of the Aryan nation. The 54th Chapter of the *Yasna*, comprising two verses only, is devoted to his praise. He is usually known as *Ishya* or the beloved one. But there is another and more familiar aspect of *Airyaman* as the genius of health, in which capacity he works as the assistant of *Asha Vahishta* (the best righteousness) and *Yasht* III (Ardibehesht *Yasht*) celebrates his power as healer of mankind. As healer he is associated with *Nairyosangha*, the companion of fire, referred to above (*Vendidad* XXII 7 *et seq.*). In the *Vedas* also he is connected with *Agni* (fire) as with *Savitar* (Sun): (*Rg Veda* I 107,3). Prof. Sir John Rhys<sup>12</sup> rather fantastically connects *Aryaman* with the great legendary hero Arthur of Round Table fame.

So far we have reviewed the close resemblance between the *Avestan* and Vedic Sanskrit languages, and the inti-

mate affinity which prevails between the Avestan angels and the Vedic deities. This close parallelism between the two can be accounted for by the fact that both the Zarathushtrian and Vedic faiths were branches of the primeval Indo-Iranian religion, once followed by the progenitors of the two people. We have yet, however, to discuss their beliefs, customs, rituals and traditions, which will leave hardly any room for doubt about the conclusion in the minds of the readers.

The study of comparative religions has convincingly shown that ancestor-worship is common to most of the ancient faiths. The departed ancestors are known in Hinduism as *Pitris*, while in Zarathushtrianism the name given to the eternal counterpart of the human soul is *Fravashi*. There is a marked similarity between the Zarathushtrian belief in the *Fravashis* and the Vedic conception of the *Pitris*, referred to in the *Rg Veda* X 14, 7-8 and X 61, 18-19. The 15th hymn of the 10th and last book of the *Rg Veda* is exclusively devoted to the *Pitris*. Among the Zarathushtrians the individual soul is called *raoan*, while the universal and absolute soul is known as *Fravashi*, first referred to in *Yasna* XXXVII 3 and celebrated at length in *Yasht* XIII. The particular soul, inhabiting the earthly body, is supposed to be but a reflection of the immortal and divine spirit or the *Fravashi*. *Fravashis*, being eternal, existed even before the Creation. A *Fravashi* protects the individual throughout his earthly career, and on his death returns to the heavenly regions. The Vedic *Pitris* are the guardian spirits of departed ancestors, and their functions are more restricted than those of the *Fravashis*.

Both the *Fravashis* and the *Pitris* are invoked for help and protection during life; both dwell in the highest heaven; both can be invoked individually or collectively.

Both are worshipped with water, fruits and cakes; but among the Zarathushtrians in later ages various viands were offered with a view either to securing a higher position for the dead in the next world, or brighter terrestrial prospects for the survivors through the good offices of the departed. The last ten days, known as the *Fravardegān* or *Mukfād*, of the Zarathushtrian calendar are specially set apart for the worship of the dead: the number of days has however been extended to eighteen by priestly legislation. The last day for the worship of the dead is known among the Zarathushtrians as the *Gāthā Vahishtāišti*, and among the Hindus as the *Sarapitri Amāvāsyā*, and both people regard those days with particular sanctity. The last fortnight of the eleventh Hindu month Bhādrapad is meant for the *Shrāddha* ceremony of the dead, which bears a striking resemblance to the Zarathushtrian ritual in the prayers chanted, the spirits invoked, the boons desired and the offerings presented on the occasion.

The *Nayjote* ceremony of investing a Zarathushtrian child of either sex with the sacred shirt and girdle (*Sudreh* and *Kushti*) dates back to very ancient times. Firdausi attributes the custom to the Pishdadian king Jamshid in the dawn of Iranian civilization, while others assign the credit thereof to the apostle Homa, a predecessor of Zarathushtra. Zarathushtra, however, saw the necessity of continuing this ritual in his reformed faith. The same custom under the name of *Upanayana* is followed by the Hindus who invest the boy with the *Yagnopavita* (girdle). The Hindu girl is, however, not permitted to wear the girdle, though on her marriage her husband is invested with an additional girdle on her behalf. The Zarathushtrians wind the girdle round the waist in three circles; the Hindus wear it on the shoulder across the body. The time for performing the "sacred thread" ceremony is before

the 10th year in the case of the Parsis and from the 8th to the 16th year among the Hindus. One other difference may here be noted: the ceremony is not performed on Hindus of the lower classes, who are not supposed to be *dwiija* or twice-born: in Zarathushtrianism no such distinction prevails.

There is also a remarkable similarity in some of the purification ceremonies of both faiths. The *Vendidad* enjoins the external and even internal use of *gomez* or consecrated bull's urine for the cure of physical ailments and even for spiritual uplift. This can be compared with the Hindu use of the *Panchgavya* or the five products of the cow—milk, curds, ghee, dung and urine—for almost identical purposes. Such remedies as cow's dung and urine have been in use even to-day in Indian villages and were practised even in Europe in the 19th century by peasant physicians, as stated by Dr. Martin Haug.<sup>11</sup> Even in our days matter still more revolting is administered to the patient in the most approved allopathic treatment in the form of pills or through injections with satisfactory results.

Both the Iranian and Indian priests made use of a certain kind of sacred grass known to the Zarathushtrians as *Baresman* or *Barsam* (*Vendidad* XIV 4) and to the Hindus as *Kusha* or *Darbha* (*R̥g Veda* II 3, 3-4 and X 70, 4). In later times the *Barsam* twigs were replaced in Zarathushtrian ceremonies by metallic wires.

People in the Indo-Iranian age were fond of drinking the juice of the *Soma* plant, renowned for its efficacy and celebrated at length in Book IX of the *R̥g Veda* and in Chapters IX to XI of the *Yasna*. There is hardly a custom with its attendant ritual, prevailing among two peoples, which presents such marked similarities as the drinking of the *Soma* juice, known in the Zarathushtrian religion as the *Haoma*. The importance assigned in both



these ancient faiths to this custom clearly shows that it must have originated in a common source in pre-historic times. This plant was supposed to grow on the Alburz mountains and its use was popularized by the prophet Homa, who is said to have bestowed on it his own name. The marvellous results following its use may be judged from the fact that, according to *Yasna* IX, four persons who consumed its juice became fathers of four illustrious sons:-Vivanghān begot Jamshid; Āthwiyān became father of Faridun; the heroic Kershāsp traced his being to Thrit (Asrat), while no less a personage than the Prophet Zarathushtra was born of Pourushaspa.

There is a good deal of resemblance in the preparation of the beverage in the two faiths. Both Zarathushtrian and Brahminical priests pounded the *Soma* plant in a mortar and squeezed the juice, which was strained by the Hindus through a filter made of wool, and by the Zarathushtrians through a metal saucer with nine holes. The extract was often diluted with water, milk and pomegranate juice to reduce its intoxicating effects. It was believed that the *Soma* juice would endow the consumer with health, wealth, wisdom, eloquence and even immortality. The extravagant hopes entertained from this wonderful plant-juice led to its indiscriminate use which probably ended in drunkenness and consequent social degradation. Though Zarathushtra, in conformity with the prevailing social custom, profusely praises *Haoma* and asks from him the boons of intelligence, courage, health and prosperity (*Yasna* IX 16-32), he was not unmindful of its indiscriminate use and showed himself definitely averse to drunkenness in the *Gāthās* (*Yasna* XLVIII 10). The discontinuance of this popular but intoxicating beverage was one of the probable causes of the great split between the followers of the new-founded religion of Zarathushtra and the conservative upholders of the ancient faith.

As observed previously, centuries before Zarathushtra and the great split, the forefathers of the present-day Zarathushtrians and Hindus lived as one race in the Indo-Iranian age. S. K. Hodiwala<sup>14</sup> has ventured to penetrate into the twilight of the remote past when history as a science could hardly have been seriously attempted. He has tried to show the identity of several renowned characters recorded in the *Avesta* with the equally famous figures mentioned in the *R̥g Veda*. The resemblances are indeed striking, but the difficulties in the procedure are formidable, for a character in the one scripture may appear in another under a different name, perhaps a family cognomen or a patronymic or an honorific, bestowed on him by the people to signalize his great achievement. The ground we step on is very slippery for though the legends are numerous the facts are few, and the inferences inducing the researcher to identification of two different characters in two different faiths are very tempting: a single false step is likely to hurl the rash interpreter in the Serbonian bog of confusion and error. Taking however S. K. Hodiwala's work, *Indo-Iranian Religion*<sup>15</sup> as our guide, we may here mention a few of the leading characters of the *Avesta*, who figure also in ancient Vedic literature under the same or similar names.

The legends about Jamshid, son of Vivanghān, are so strikingly similar to those of the Vedic Yama, son of Vivasvan, that the two heroes may without much hesitation be taken as one and the same person. Jamshid is after all Yimakhsheta (the shining Yima), and even his father's name Vivanghān bears similarity to Vivasvan, father of the Vedic Yama. Yama had a sister Yami who in the *R̥g Veda* X 10 persuaded him in vain to marry her: according to the *Bundahishn* XXXI 1 Jamshid married his sister Jamak and both became the progenitors of the

human race, though according to XV 1 and 4 of the same work, our primeval ancestors were Masli and Maslian, born of the seed of Gayomard. During the glacial epoch Jamshid had saved Iran from a calamitous deluge of snow (*Vendidad* II): according to Hindu legend, Manu, had saved his nation from an overwhelming flood that had submerged the land. Jamshid is considered the father of Iranian civilization, while Manu claims the honour of being regarded as one of the foremost founders of Hindu race and religion. A series of glorious non-violent achievements, unparalleled in the annals of Iran, had turned Jamshid's head and he had the misfortune to lay claim to divinity and thus invite his own fall. Yama on the other hand was deified by the Hindus themselves, and being the first to suffer death among human beings, was regarded as the king of the dead by his people (*Rg Veda* X 14, 2 and 9). According to *Rg Veda* X 14, 11 Yama in the next world is accompanied by two dogs; according to the to the *Vendidad* XIII 9 and *Bundehishn* (Supplementary Chapter: 1st verse), the Chinvat Bridge at the frontiers of the celestial world is guarded by spiritual dogs. Looking to this close parallelism, it could hardly be considered rash to conclude that Yama of the *Vedas* and Yima (Jamshid) of the *Avesta* are actually one and the same person.

Thrita (Thraitāna or Faridun), son of Athwya, has been regarded in the *Avesta*, as the healer of diseases: he bears resemblance to the Vedic Trita, son of Āpatya, to whom are consigned all threatened unpleasantness and calamity (*Rg Veda* VIII 47, 13-17). The Avestan Thrita destroys Azi Dahāka (Zohāk), the Iranian embodiment of evil, who was cursed with Azi (serpents), growing from his shoulders. As pointed out by S. K. Hodiwala, this Azi Dahāka seems to be the Avestan equivalent of the Sanskrit Ahi Dāsa (literally, serpent-demon), who is demolished by Trita.

The resemblance between the names, attributes and achievements of the Avestan and Vedic heroes must be considered striking. The Vedic demon (storm-cloud) Gandharva, pierced by Indra according to *R̥g Veda* VIII 66, 5 corresponds to the Avestan monster Gandareva, killed by Kershāsp, according to the *Ābān Yasht*. The huge man-eating dragon Sruvar, slain by Kershāsp, according to *Yasna* IX 11 corresponds to the demon Shambar of *R̥g Veda* I 54, 4. But the proud king Keresāni, dethroned by the prophet Homa, according to *Yasna* IX 24, bears only a nominal and vague resemblance to the archer Krishānu, the protector of the celestial Soma, referred to in the *R̥g Veda* IX 77, 2. It is possible that in times subsequent to the great split two or more different versions may have been formed of the same legend once current among the two sections of the same nation in the days of their harmonious co-existence.

One of the important characters of the Indo-Iranian age was Kavi Ushanā or Kāvya Ushanā, who according to the *R̥g Veda* VIII 23, 17 had installed a holy fire for popular worship, for fire had always been regarded sacred even in pre-Zarathushtrian times. This Vedic Kavi Ushanā, who is described as a Rishi and the special friend of Indra, resembles the Kayānian king Kavi Ushan of the Avesta, immortalized under the name of Kaikāoos in the epic of Firdausi. It is true however that Kaikāoos is not credited in the Avesta with the achievement of installation of the holy fire: but it is well known to the readers of the *Shāhnāmah* that his paternal grandson, the saintly king Kaikhusru, known in the *Avesta* as Kavi Husravah, had installed the fire Āzar Gushasp. It is possible that Kaikhusru's achievement was ascribed by the Vedic bards to his grandfather Kaikāoos or Kavi Ushanā.<sup>16</sup>

The *Gāthās* and the *R̥g Veda* were probably composed before and immediately after the great split, and a study

of the two scriptures will further convince the reader about the intimate likeness in the beliefs and customs of the forefathers of the present day Parsis and Hindus. These two religious works were composed in the very initial stages of civilization, and scholars have been puzzled over the question of the existence of the art of writing in those early days. The argument was once advanced that the Vedic hymns were composed by the sages and remembered by the people till writing was introduced to save literature from undeserved extinction. It was once held by some scholars that the art of writing was introduced in India about the 7th century B.C. and that the Indian alphabet was derived from the earliest Phœnician alphabet which was in use in the 9th century B.C. But their apple-cart was upset by the epoch-making discovery of the Indus Valley Civilization (about 3100 B.C.), wherein people were found to use a pictorial script, from which the Indian alphabet may well be supposed to have been derived. It is true that according to the *Shāhnāmah*, king Tehmurath (known as Divband or demon-binder) introduced the alphabet into Iran, being taught the same by the "demons" or barbarian tribes that he had conquered. This great achievement of pre-historic times is very flattering to the national pride of the Iranians; but it is hard to swallow the statement, for civilization in Iran began with Jamshid, the successor of Tehmurath, and centuries after him Zarathushtra ended the nomadic and inaugurated the pastoral age among his people. It is therefore not within the limits of possibility to hold that writing should have existed in Iran at such an early date and under such primitive conditions as prevailed in the times of king Tehmurath.

Caste-formation did not exist in the Vedic age, though the four castes are distinctly referred to for the first time in the Purushasukta, being the 90th hymn of the 10th and

last Book of the *R̥g Veda*. Zarathushtrianism knows no caste-system either, though king Jamshid is said by Firdausi to have divided his subjects into four classes—priests, warriors, farmers and labourers. But there are no “untouchables” among the Iranians, and no one is considered low or mean because of his birth as among the post-Vedic Hindus. Early enough in the history of Hinduism, however, during the composition of the *Brāhmaṇas*, the caste-ridden society crystallized itself into a system, based on birth and heredity instead of on character or merit. Whatever be the advantages of the caste-system to Hinduism of the past, it is evident that it is not equalitarian but hierarchical in spirit and structure, and has thus become as inflexible as a steel-frame, detrimental to national unity and serving as a handicap to the successful functioning of democracy upto the present day. The unyielding rigidity of the post-Vedic Hindu caste-system is foreign to the Zarathushtrian spirit, though it must be admitted that the Zarathushtrian priestly class gradually came to be regarded as sacrosanct as the *Brāhmins*, transmitting its supposed holiness to its descendants and remaining inviolate to the admission of the other classes.

The doctrine of transmigration of souls cannot be traced in the Zarathushtrian and Vedic scriptures. Stray references to rebirth, most of them vague and inconclusive, may be found in the *Gāthās* and the *Avesta*, but they are not enough to convince the reader of the existence of any well-planned scheme of rebirth in the faith. Nor is there the faintest idea of re-birth in Vedic literature, the *R̥g Vedic* verse X 16, 3 being utterly hazy and obscure in its implications. It is however in the Upanishadic age that the theory of rebirth came to be propounded, and it has now taken an ineradicably deep root in the Hindu mind and is inevitably and unmistakably reflected in its philosophy and literature.

The *Avatār* theory or the doctrine of the descent of the Supreme Being on earth in incarnate human form for the propagation of virtue and the destruction of vice does not at any time figure in the Zarathushtrian faith; nor is it to be found in the *R̥g Veda*. It was only in later times, perhaps in the *Sūtra* period, that it made its appearance in Hinduism, whereof it has now become an integral principle.

The Indo-Iranian age knew no temples, for nature-worship could best be carried on in the open-air shrine of nature itself. In the Gāthic age Iran had no temples, and the great fires were installed on mountain-heights and were apparently fed by subterranean currents of oil in which the soil of the country abounded. Temples were equally unknown to Vedic times, for the age was concerned more directly with the deities than with their habitations, which arose for various reasons at a later period only when necessity became the mother of invention. According to Prof. A. J. Toynbee, it was the Buddhists who designed the first substantial religious buildings on Indian soil in the form of "stupas" (reliquaries) and "vihāras" (monasteries).<sup>17</sup>

Idolatry was similarly unknown in the Indo-Iranian faith. The Zarathushtrian religion has never recognized it and it was never practised in Zarathushtrian Iran except in very rare cases which are usually deplored. Nor does idolatry appear in the *R̥g Veda*: it came into existence in Hinduism only in its later stages.

Dogmas, conventions and traditions usually arise some generations after the foundation of a religion, and hence they are absent in the Gāthic and Vedic ages when beliefs were still in a state of formation, awaiting the inevitable, subsequent stages of crystallization.

Similarly in those early days in the cradle of human civilization there were hardly any ceremonies worth the name in the Gāthic and Vedic ages. Ceremonies too take

time for their appearance, though in both religions they appeared early enough. Yet when once the process begins, ceremonies tend to multiply at an alarming speed and threaten to stifle rather than stimulate the spirit of religion.

Priesthood also does not appear in the dawn of a religious movement, but appear it must with the propagation of the faith. It keeps pace with the growth of ceremonies and dogmas, the practice of symbolatry and the installation of temples. Priests are custodians of the faith, and to them we largely owe the preservation of religion, study of theology, interpretation of scripture, selfless social service and the exemplification in themselves of the ideally religious life. But unhappily it is to the priests also that we owe the inconvenient growth in ceremonies (sometimes to serve their own economic ends), the rigidity of dogmas and conventions, the perpetuity of crass conservatism, the blindness and cruelty of fanaticism, the encouragement to ridiculous superstition, and the long-continued and bitter hostility often betrayed by these vested interests against the march of science and enlightenment. The Gāthic and Vedic ages were hardly aware of priestly functions, for the individual of those days wished to establish direct contact with the Infinite without ecclesiastical mediation, but the time soon came for priesthood to arise in these two faiths till they both became as priest-ridden as any other religion of the world.

The Indo-Iranian faith was thoroughly practical and was characterized by a robust optimistic outlook. It inculcated no seclusion from society, no renunciation of duties, no indulgence in asceticism and mortification of the flesh. The same characteristics were accentuated by Zarathushtra who insisted that salvation was more dependent on the performance of work and duty, service and benevolent deeds than exclusively on isolation and meditation. Even the *R̥g Veda* had pronouncedly progressivist rather than quietistic



tendencies, and it believed in a vigorous, virtuous, worldly existence with due adoration paid to the gods. Even the Avestan and R̥g Vedic prayers were frankly offered for earthly goods and were as often egotistic as they were altruistic in their supplication. It was in its later developments, when the *Aranyakas* and *Upanishads* were composed, that Hinduism prescribed curtailment and even extinction of desires and asceticism as the means, and identification of the finite soul with the Infinite through yoga as the end of life.

A remarkable similarity between the Gāthic and Vedic ages may be found in the high status of and esteem shown to women, who in many respects were on a level of equality with the men-folk. The Zarathushtrian women even of ancient times never wore the veil but enjoyed reasonable freedom and educational facilities. They participated in ceremonial rites and according to Dr. Dhalla<sup>18</sup> there were instances of women having officiated as priestesses and administered justice as well. Both righteous men and women were invoked without distinction in Zarathushtrian ceremonies. Both men and women were invested with the sacred shirt and girdle, and both were supposed to fare equally in the next world according to their deserts. In the Vedic age also women enjoyed a very high position in society, though the wife was generally subject to the husband. The women were not secluded as inferior beings; they co-operated with their husbands in offering sacrifices and in worship of the gods (*R̥g Veda* I 72, 5 and I 83, 3). Nay, a Hindu woman was held to be competent to perform the religious ceremonies alone in the absence of her husband. Some women were regarded as *Rishikūs* and *Brahmarūdinis* (rishis & seers), and according to Dr. R. C. Majumdar,<sup>19</sup> some R̥g Vedic hymns were actually composed by women e.g. *Lopāmudrā*, *Apātā*, *Sikātā*, *Ghoshā* etc. Women in the Vedic age were not at the disposal of the men-folk and were not married

without their own consent, as is apparent from the custom of *Swayamvara* (self-choice in marriage) that appeared in the epic age and continued for many generations. At the same time Hindu women were not exaggeratedly idolized with chivalrous adoration as in Mediaeval Europe.

In the faith of Zarathushtra in the later Pahlavi age the status of women markedly deteriorated, but it was still worse in post-Vedic Hinduism, where in later times girls were given away in marriage by their parents at a tender age when it would be ridiculous to ask their consent, and, worse still, were prevented from re-marriage in case of widowhood. Indeed the question of re-marriage did not arise because it was considered meritorious for a widow to immolate herself on the funeral pyre of her husband. It is a far cry from the reasonable liberty granted to women in the Vedic age to the stern dictum of the *Manu Smṛiti*:—"Woman does not deserve independence," that fettered the freedom of Hindu womanhood for generations to come. The Hindu ideal of womanhood is realized, for instance, in *Sitā*, *Sāvitri*, and *Anasuyā*; they doubtless were paragons of virtue, but the measure of their moral excellence was tested largely, if not exclusively, by their loyalty to and sacrifice for their "lords." They were mere shadows of their husbands, their very existence being inconceivable without their devotion to their partners, who gave them life and being. Brilliant exceptions there indeed were down the centuries, but the average Indian woman languished, and what was strange, was content to languish, in obscurity. Scarcely in Hinduism have the Juggernaut wheels of custom and convention rolled with such relentless monotony as they have in the case of the subjection of women, who remained more or less in the same state of helpless dependence till the dawn of the 20th century, awaiting the advent of the New Woman of India, typified, for instance, in Mrs. Sarojini Naidu

or Lady Vidyagauri Nilkanth, who, besides being devoted wives and mothers, could yet rise by their own individual merits to an eminence, independent of their husbands. The "changeless East" had never remained so changeless as it did in the status of her women since the post-Vedic age, till her conservatism yielded to the dilatory law of evolution and the impact of Western civilization.

People in the Indo-Iranian age used intoxicants for ceremonial purposes and particularly indulged in the free use of the *Soma* juice, to which were attributed high medicinal and even spiritual properties. This fascination for the juice prevailed before and continued during the times of Zarathushtra as it did during the Vedic age. The Vedic people were also addicted to stronger drinks like the *sura*, prepared from corn and barley, but its use, together with gambling and indulgence in anger, is condemned in the *R̥g Veda* VII 86; 6. Zarathushtra was, however, aware, as shown previously, that an excessive use of the *Soma* juice led to drunkenness, which therefore stands condemned by the Prophet in the *Gāthās* (*Yasna* XLVIII 10). The Vedic people offered a stiff resistance to the ban and continued their attachment to this practice, which had taken such a firm hold of society as to make its abolition extremely difficult. This difference of opinion between the conservative Vedic people and the followers of the reformed faith of Zarathushtra assumed serious proportions and led to the great split, referred to previously. Strange to say in later times the Hindus, who were once kindly inclined to intoxicants in the Vedic age, became ardent prohibitionists and tabooed the use of wine altogether: and it is still more curious that the Zarathushtrians, whose Prophet had taken the lead in condemning drunkenness, should have in their later legislation relaxed in this direction and permitted a moderate use of wine in society.

The use of meat and even beef was common in the Indo-Iranian age, even saints and *rishis* consuming the meat of goats and bullocks, particularly of animals slaughtered for sacrifice. According to the *R̥g Veda* X 85, 13, the meat of oxen was served as food on special festive occasions like weddings. Though according to the *R̥g Veda* VIII 90, 15 the cow was regarded sacred and considered *aghnyā* (not to be killed), still we are surprised to note a custom in the Vedic age to serve beef particularly to the guest who was therefore known by the name of *goghna* (cow-killer—to be more precise, one for whose entertainment the cow was killed). Nay, Mahāmahopādhyāya Dr. P. V. Kane<sup>20</sup> has observed that it was just because of the sacredness of the cow that its flesh continued to be eaten. According to the *Shatapath Brahmana* III 1, 2, 21<sup>21</sup> we are told that once during a discussion as to whether an initiated officiant should or should not eat the flesh of the cow sacrificed for the Agnishtoma sacrifice, the great *Rishi* Yājñavalkya observed: "I for one do eat it, provided it be fat". According to a fairly familiar passage in the *Bṛahadāraṇyaka Upanishad* VIII 4, he who desires to have a son unvanquished in the assembly of pandits...who can explain all the *Vedas* and live a long life, should eat rice cooked with flesh and clarified butter, whether the flesh be that of a bull or a ram. C. V. Vaidya<sup>22</sup> observes, "There is of course not the least doubt that at the beginning of the epic period ...beef was freely eaten by the Indo-Aryans." Dr. Rajendralal Mitra in his dissertation on "Beef"<sup>23</sup> notes various occasions when beef was eaten in the ancient age. It was only in later times that a revolutionary change was effected in the popular outlook, and the practice of beef-eating, which was once customary, was ultimately reprobated as a heinous sin. It is possible that Buddhism and Jainism with their insistence on compassion for all forms of life were responsible

for this very welcome change. In course of time, says J. E. Sanjana,<sup>24</sup> cow-worship was instituted during the Brahminical revival, patronized by the Gupta emperors.

The Zarathushtrians throughout their career have always consumed mutton, and meat was the staple article of diet among the Iranians. But the *Gāthās* of Zarathushtra have always inculcated kindness to the cow, which symbolizes the earth, in the famous Gāthic verse (*Yasna* XXIX 1), and compassion to all animals (*Cf.*, *Yasna* XXXII 12, L 1 and LI 14). Hence we are confronted with another anomaly, Zarathushtrianism, where kindness for animal life is inculcated from the very beginning, has permitted the use of mutton in its later scriptures and legislation, while Hinduism, which began with the slaughter of sheep and even cows for food in the Vedic age, subsequently became spiritualized, regarding the cow as a sacred animal and discouraging the killing of animals to satisfy the appetite of man.

Sacrifices, with a view to propitiating the Supreme Being, had always been offered in primitive religions, and since in ancient times wealth consisted mostly of animals it was customary to offer them in large numbers to secure the divine favour or avert an impending calamity. The Indo-Iranian age was no exception to the rule. The Vedic people used to sacrifice animals to Indra, Agni, Vāyu and other deities and thus invoke their protection. The sacrifice of oxen is referred to in the *R̥g Veda* II 7, 5 and of goats and horses in I 162, 3. There are in the *R̥g Veda* I 24 and in other hymns references even to human sacrifice, for instance, in the well known story of the lad Sunahshepa, who was sold by his father in return for cows to Rohit, son of Harishchandra, and was about to be sacrificed to Varuṇa. Sacrifices continued in Hinduism for a fairly long time, but the spread of Buddhism and Jainism contributed

to its decline and ultimate discontinuance, though not its total abolition. Zarathushtra's tender heart revolted against these bloody rituals, and he banned the sacrifice of animals, for in his opinion the God of Love could not be propitiated by such ruthless practices. Again, living as he did in an agricultural age, the Prophet must have thought it a suicidal policy for the country thus recklessly to dissipate the animal life, which constituted the main wealth of the nation. But, as noticed previously, after Zarathushtra's death the Indo-Iranian nature-deities, banished by him from his religion, returned into the faith in the form of angels, and to make the retrogression complete, these angels were appeased by the very sacrifices that the Prophet had tried his best to exterminate. Hence once again the altars began to reek with the blood of slaughtered animals, sacrificed to the various angels, especially to Ardivisura and Mithra (Cf., *Yashts* V and X).

The religious reforms of Zarathushtra at last brought matters to a head, and people, differing fundamentally on the important issues of life, found it impossible to live and work in co-operation. The split became inevitable, for the eyes of the reformists were now thoroughly opened to the abuses of society, but they failed however to enlist the sympathy of the conservatives. The important reforms, suggested by Zarathushtra, as noticed above, were: Monotheism in place of polytheistic nature-worship, abolition of animal sacrifices, prohibition of drunkenness and in particular of the use of *Soma* juice, establishment of pastoral in place of the unsettled, nomadic life as it then prevailed, and the institution of a lofty, moral code, based on righteousness, justice, benevolence and godliness in place of the materialistic, self-seeking and rancorous spirit that existed in the people, whose highest ingenuity consisted in securing one's gain at the expense of another. The split between a race

that had amicably lived together may be deplored, but it served a useful purpose, as it saved Iran from the ravages of a civil war. A large group consequently came down, crossed the Hindukush mountains and settled in the Punjab, where under different environments they evolved their own religion and customs, coloured to a certain extent by gradual association with the Dravidian aborigines of India. Hence arose the Hindu religion, receding from the Indo-Iranian background, and working out its own mythology, philosophy, rituals, art and culture. The followers of Zarathushtra remained in Iran, which, owing to its geographical position, was often the target of attack by various nations. The Zarathushtrian religion may thus have, to a certain extent, lost its pristine purity by contact with other faiths; but the loss was often counterbalanced by gain when Zarathushtrianism assimilated to itself all that was noble in the faiths with which it was destined to come into contact.

Certain deplorable results of the great schism deserve consideration. History has always testified to the wisdom of the Latin maxim: *Corruptio optimi pessima* (the best, when corrupted, becomes the worst). Religion is the best of divine gifts, as it enables the finite soul to aspire to the Infinite through truth, love and peace; and yet when the very end of religion is misunderstood, no strife is so bitter and no antagonism so implacable as that caused by religious dissensions. It then becomes natural for people, who thus break out into hostility, to malign each other; and the forefathers of the present-day Parsis and Hindus had their due share in the campaign of vilification that followed. They not only traduced each other but even proceeded to the calumny of each other's faiths, and derived satisfaction in the denigration of deities belonging to the opposite religion. For instance, Ahura Mazda (the Lord of Wisdom)

was the usual term by which Zarathushtra knew the Supreme Being. Now the word Ahura (the Vedic Asura) was used in an elevated sense in the earlier portions of the *Rg Veda* and was applied to several deities e.g. to Indra in *Rg Veda* I 54, 3, to the Sun in I 35, 7, to Agni in IV 2, 5, but more particularly to the great god Varuna in I 24, 14 and II 27, 10. After the great split, when relations between the two communities were hopelessly strained, the same word was used in a vicious sense in the *Rg Veda* X 53, 4 and, indeed, throughout this tenth and last Book of that scripture. But the ancestors of the present-day Parsis were not slow to retaliate. They fell upon the most sacred word Deva (god), so often found in the *Rg Veda*, and used it in the detestable sense of the devil throughout their religious literature. Even to-day, when the Parsis and Hindus are living in peace and harmony, it is regrettable, though a trifle amusing, to find the same words, signifying all that is exalted and divine in one scripture and all that is diabolical and monstrous in another. But the words stand as a silent testimony to the irreconcilable hostility that had then arisen between the two communities after the great split.

Various deities of the Hindus have been converted into demons and placed in Inferno by the Zarathushtrians, regardless of the fact that these very "demons" were once adored as gods by their own forefathers in the Indo-Iranian age. But as love is blind, so too are passion and prejudice, which besog the human vision and prevent it from exercising the gift of reason. Indra, as observed previously, is desecrated as a demon in the *Vendidad* X 9 and XIX 43: under the name of Indar he stands condemned in Pahlavi literature as a demon who seduces people from the path of virtue and incites them to give up their sacred shirt and girdle (*Bundehishn* XXVIII 3): we are moreover assured



that Indar would be defeated by Ardibehesht (righteousness) in the final struggle (*Bundehishn* XXX 11). But it is passing strange that, as pointed out by S. K. Hodiwala,<sup>25</sup> though the god Indra becomes a demon in the Zarathushtrian faith, his special attribute Vritrahaṇa (slayer of Vritra) in the *R̥g Veda* becomes Verethraghna in the *Avesta*, and is identified with Behrām Yazat, who is adored as the angel of victory, even though Indra continues to be execrated as a demon. Contrariwise the Vedic Ashwin stars are adored by the Zarathushtrians under the name of Aspinas, though their special epithet Nāsatya (the Avestan Nāonghāithya) is condemned in the *Avesta* as a demon (*Vendidad* X 9 and XIX 43) and identified in Pahlavi literature with Taromat, the evil spirit that dries up the spring of devotion in man (*Bundehishn* XXX 11). Next to Indra the unidentified "Sharva"<sup>26</sup> of the Hindu pantheon has been converted by the Zarathushtrians into the demon Saurva and consigned by them to their pandemonium, reserved for the gods of their *ci-devant* friends and brothers (*Vendidad* X 9 and XIX 43: *Bundehishn* XXVIII 3 and XXX 11). Even Milton, belonging to far more civilized times, betrayed the same fanatic Puritan mentality when he peopled his hell not with creatures of his imagination but with the easily available heathen deities of the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Philistines, the Egyptians *et hoc genus omne* in his *Paradise Lost*, Books I and II.

From deities let us come down to human mortals who suffered likewise if they happened to belong to the opposite camp. The scholars and seers of the Vedic people, who were *Soma* priests (*R̥g Veda* IX 72, 6) and believed to be divinely inspired and endowed with occult wisdom, are referred to with great respect in the *R̥g Veda* I 142, 8. They were known as *kavi* or wise, and the term was applied even to the Vedic gods like Agni, the Ashwins and

the Māruts (*R̥g Veda* III 14, 1). Even in Iran, *kavi* was a eulogistic term prefixed to the names of kings, like *Kavi Kavāta* (Kaiqubād), *Kavi Usana* (Kaikāos), *Kari Haosrava* (Kaikhusru) and *Kari Vishtāsp* (Kai Gushtāsp), who were all for that reason said to have belonged to the Kayānian dynasty. But in the days of Zarathushtra these *kavis*, *karapans* and *usikhshs*, headed by Bendwa and Grehma, sided with the conservatives, and offered a stubborn resistance to the reform of the Prophet. Hence the esteemed word *kavi* fell into disrepute and came to mean the wilfully blind as *karapa* came to signify the wilfully deaf. The *kavis* who were philosophers and scholars were consequently denounced as soothsayers, charlatans, casuists & magicians in the *Gāthās* (*Yasna* XXXII 15, XLIV 20, XLVI 11 and LI 14), as were the Pharisees and Scribes (Jewish conservatives and traditionists) condemned by Jesus as hypocrites, fools and blind guides in Matthew XXIII 13, 17 and 24. The *kavis* and *karapans* may have been profound pandits but they were not spiritually advanced, as they attached greater value to the observance of ceremonial rules than to the spirit of religion which lies in adherence to the eternal values of life. The treatment given to these *kavis* and *karapans* is a further instance to denote the animosity that now prevailed between the followers of Zarathushtra and their opponents, the harshness of the struggle and the lamentable split in which it terminated. As observed by Dr. B. K. Ghosh,<sup>27</sup> "the two peoples turned their backs upon each other as it were, and developed their distinctive civilizations apparently without the least mutual influence, although in language, culture and religion their similarity in the earliest period was little short of identity."

Thus the Indo-Iranians who lived as one people in the same region, speaking the same language, following the same religion and practising the same customs were now

partitioned into two communities, inhabiting different countries, speaking different languages, following different religions and adopting different habits of life. And yet when an attempt is made to study their languages, analyse their faiths and investigate their customs, we arrive at countless similarities leading us to the inevitable conclusion that both these sister-communities were branches of the same parental stock that was known in times long past as the Indo-Iranian race. The Zarathushtrians remained and flourished in Iran and in course of time built up the great Achaemenian empire, but their State and religion received a crushing blow at the hands of Alexander in 330 B.C. Their shattered power and faith were however resuscitated after A.D. 226, and once again the might of the Sasanians and the religion of Zarathushtra illumined the pages of history, till after the lapse of four centuries and a quarter they utterly collapsed before the irresistible arms of Arabia. Life for the Iranians then became impossible in Iran itself, for the Arab menace against Zarathushtrianism and the security of life, self-respect and independence of non-Muslims became unendurable. It was then that a large group of Zarathushtrians, driven in despair from their fatherland for the preservation of their faith, which they loved far more than their country, at last sought shelter on the Western shores of India, among the very Hindus from whose forefathers their own ancestors had separated ages ago during the great split. The episode of this adventure of the Zarathushtrian Pilgrim Fathers will be related at length in Chapter III.

When an Indian Zarathushtrian of the present day happens to go on a pilgrimage to the fatherland of his ancestors, he is naturally regarded not as a brother but as a complete stranger by reason of the difference in religion, language, dress, customs and the diversity of his interests:

yet brother he is when the ancient past lifts the painted veil and reveals its secrets, and when an attempt is made to study that individual from a linguistic, social, cultural and particularly from the religious point of view. It is said that once in London the fog was so heavy that all vehicular traffic had to be suspended, for it was impossible to see even at a distance of a few feet. A pedestrian, who happened to be out in such a dreary evening, observed an object at a distance though he was unable to make out what it was. On coming nearer he realized that it was a human being: at closer quarters he had an impression that the person might be his friend: but when he actually came into contact with him, he rejoiced to find that the stranger was his own brother. So too, after the impenetrable mist of millenniums is dispelled by the sunbeams of knowledge, the Iranians and Indians will be delighted to recognize themselves as brothers and as two offshoots of the great Indo-Iranian stock, destined after numerous vicissitudes to meet and co-exist again in the hospitable country of India. We indulge the hope that the cordial relations between these two communities, the Parsis and the Hindus, may now continue their smooth course, unimpeded by splits and dissensions, but cemented for all time by harmony and goodwill.

## NOTES

1 *Arctic Home of the Vedas* by B. G. Tilak

2 *Vide* Dr. I. J. S. Taraporewala's Preface to his

*Divine Songs of Zarathushtra*

3 *Vedic India* by Z. A. Ragozin

4 *Religion of the R̥g Veda* by H. D. Griswold

5 "Indo-Iranian Religion" (in the *K. R. Cama*

*Oriental Institute Journal* No. 4) by S. K. Hodiwala

6 *History of Zoroastrianism* by Dastur Dr. M. N.

Dhalla

7 *Op. cit.*

8 *Cambridge History of India* Vol. I: Chap. XIV

by Prof. A. V. W. Jackson

9 *Op. cit.*

10 *Op. cit.*

11 *Religion of the Iranian Peoples* by Dr. C. I. Tiele

12 Quoted in *Iranian and Indian Analogues of the*

*Legend of the Holy Grail* by Sir Jehangir C. Coyaji

13 *Essays on the Parsis* by Dr. Martin Haug

14 *Zarathushtra and his Contemporaries in the R̥g Veda*

by S. K. Hodiwala

15 "Indo-Iranian Religion" (in the *K. R. Cama*

*Oriental Institute Journal* No. 4) by S. K. Hodiwala

16 Firdausi in his great epic describes an eccentric attempt of King Kaikāoos to fly in the heavens. With this object in view he fixed four poles to a big wooden tablet: pieces of flesh were attached to the top of the poles, and four hungry eagles were chained to the tablet. As the birds flew upward to secure the flesh, this very primitive type of aeroplane also began to rise in the air.

But after a time the weary birds gave up the attempt with the result that the king came down with a crash, and it was nothing short of a miracle that he happened to survive. In the opinion of S. K. Hodiwala, Kavi Ushanā is said to have made a similar attempt to fly in the skies, for, according to the *Rg Veda* I 83, 5, Ushanā Kāvya straightway drove his kine in the direction of the sun. This comparison is so vague in its significance and so lame and impotent as a conclusion, as admitted by that scholar himself, that it would be rash on our part to soar likewise on the wings of fancy in a wild endeavour to identify the fantastic design of Kaikāoos, recorded in the *Shāhnāme*, with the very humdrum activity of Kavi Ushanā, mentioned in the *Rg Veda*, driving his cows eastwards.

17 *East to West* by Prof. Arnold J. Toynbee

18 *Zoroastrian Civilization* by Dastur Dr. M. N. Dhalla

19 *Vide* Dr. R. C. Majumdar's contribution "Great Women of India" to Shri Shardamani Devi Memorial Volume

20 Quoted in *Caste and Outcaste* by J. E. Sanjana

21 *Ibid*

22 *Epic India* by C. V. Vaidya

23 Quoted in *History of Civilization of Ancient India* by R. C. Dutt

24 *Op. cit*

25 "Indo-Iranian Religion" (in the *K. R. Cama Oriental Institute Journal* No. 4) by S. K. Hodiwala

26 In his translation of the *Vendidad* Ervad K. E. Kanga observes that the Pahlavi Saurva, corresponding to the Vedic Sharva, is the demon who discharges the arrow of death.

27 Dr. B. K. Ghosh's contribution to "The Vedic Age" being Vol. I of *The History and Culture of the Indian People* (Bhāratīya Vidyā Bhavan Series)

## CHAPTER TWO

### INDO-IRANIAN CONTACTS UPTO THE ARAB CONQUEST

WE can look upon a road from two quite different points of view: the unfavourable one regards it as dividing us from the object of our desire; the optimistic standpoint on the contrary enables us to conceive the same path as leading us to the cherished goal. The Iranians and Indians have invariably adopted the latter attitude towards each other; and this cordiality need not cause surprise when it is remembered that their ancestors were once the members of the same parental Indo-Iranian stock. To the Parsis in particular, the path to Iran is the path of religion, leading them to the land where the faith of Zarathushtra had originated and flourished for centuries. It is also the path of knowledge of the ancient land, its kings and heroes of illustrious bygone ages immortalized in Firdausi's great epic. It is also the path of romance, a veritable road to Xanadu, awakening visions of a golden age when mighty monarchs decreed their stately pleasure-domes and held the gorgeous East in fee with unprecedented power and magnificence. We have noticed the close similarity between the *Vedas* and the *Avesta* as evidenced in their language, faith, deities, angels, beliefs, ceremonies, customs and traditions: we have accounted for the regrettable split which left the Iranians where they were, but drove the predecessors of the present-day Hindus to settle in the North of India. It now remains for us to trace the historical and cultural relations between the two nations, divided as the result of the great partition.

According to Dr. Sir J. J. Modi<sup>1</sup>, India is referred to only in four places in the *Avesta*—in *Yasna* 57 (known as the *Sarush Yasht*), *Meher Yasht*, *Tir Yasht* and the *Vendidad*. The most important reference to India is to be found in the *Vendidad* I 19. The work describes sixteen "excellent" places of which the 15th is the *Haptahindu*, the Avestan term for *Saptasindhu*, described in the *Vedas* and comprising the Panjab and Sindh. Finding the country fertilized by five rivers—Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas and Sutlej—the Muslims knew it as the Panjab or Five Rivers, but in fact the rivers are seven, Sindhu and Kabul having been left out of consideration. The *Haptahindu* and *Saptasindhu* are also two forms of the same word, the Sanskrit "i" being the Avestan "h", and *safta* and *hapta* both meaning seven. According to the *Vendidad* I 19 the climate of *Haptahindu* was uncomfortably warm and the women there menstruated early. Even to-day India is a warm country, and it is natural that in such countries girls arrive at puberty earlier than their Western sisters do in colder climates. The very name Hindu is of Iranian invention, being applied to those who lived near the river Hindu or Sindhu. In Persian the word seems to have deteriorated in significance, for it has come to mean black. Iran was always a link between East and West, and it was through Iran that the word Hindu migrated to Greece, but there being no "h" in their alphabet, the Greeks called our country "Indos", from which we get the familiar word "India". The Muslims finally named our country "Hindustān".

But there are far more references to the Iranians in the scriptures and ancient literature of the Hindus. The words *Pruthu* and *Parshu*, as used in the *R̥g Veda*, must be taken to mean Parthians and Parsis. It was however believed by M. P. Khareghat<sup>2</sup> that these two words were not proper names but common names, meaning, as Sāyana takes them,



a rib or a weapon prepared from the ribs. Mr. Khareghat argues that since the word "Persian" is of later origin and was first applied to the Iranians by the Greeks only in Achaemenian times, centuries after the Vedic age, it was impossible that the Vedic *Parshu* should mean Persian. Since the word Persian is non-existent in the *Avesta* itself, it could hardly be found in the *Vedas*. Hence Khareghat concludes that *Parshu* in the *Vedas* must have had quite a different significance. He further argues on similar grounds that since the Parthians arose after the conquest of Iran by Alexander, many centuries after the Vedic Age, the Vedic *Pruthu* could not possibly be identified with the Parthians.

J. M. Chatterji,<sup>1</sup> however, offers a satisfactory solution of this puzzle. He quotes the *R̥g Veda* VI 27, 8, where we are told that the *Pruthus* offered a valuable gift. Here *Pruthu* is evidently not a common name (as Khareghat maintains) but a proper name—that of a community. In the *R̥g Veda* VIII 6, 46 we find a passage: "From Tirindiz, the son of Parshu, I accepted a hundred thousand gifts". Here too *Parshu* is evidently a proper name. Another passage in the *R̥g Veda* VII 83, 1 means: "The *Pruthus*-*Parshus* rushed forward, anxious for plunder". Those commentators who take *Pruthu* and *Parshu* as common names translate the verse thus: "The men, armed with broad axes, rushed forward, anxious for plunder". Chatterji, who considers the two words as proper names, invites our attention to the significant fact that the words *Pruthu-Parshu* should have been coupled together, and that too with good cause, because both communities lived in adjoining territories. The *R̥g Veda* I 105, 8 conveys the meaning: "From all sides the *Parshus* are pestering me like a co-wife". Here too, though the meaning is quite clear, Sāyaṇa translated *Parshu* as a bone adjoining the ribs, thereby completely obscuring the sense. In the opinion of Chatterji, the knowledge of

Sāyaṇa, the famous commentator of the *Vēdas*, was defective in certain respects; for instance, he was ignorant of the fact that once the forefathers of the Parsis' and Hindus lived as one people and that the Vedic *Asura* corresponded to the Avestan *Ahura* etc. Hence Chatterji rejects Sāyaṇa's translation of the Vedic passages referred to above. European scholars like Ludwig and Weber also see in *Parshu* and *Pruthu* references to the ancient Parsis, and Weber concludes therefrom that the Hindus of the Vedic age must have had a historic connection with the original inhabitants of Iran — a conclusion corroborated by numerous instances from ancient Sanskrit literature, given below.

But how can we explain away Khareghat's theory that since the terms "Persian" (*Parshu*) and "Parthian" (*Pruthu*) came into existence during and after the Achaemenian age, they could not bear that meaning centuries ago in the *R̥g Veda*? Mahamahopadhyaya Prof. P. V. Kane<sup>4</sup> ably solves this difficulty by suggesting that *Parshu* must be a form of *Pārs* (a province of which the Pārsikās or Parsis were the inhabitants); and even though the word *Pārs* (called by the Greeks *Persis* and by the Arabs *Fārs*) is of late origin, still it is not astonishing to find in an ancient work like the *R̥g Veda* an old form (*Parshu*) of the same word (*Pārs*). Prof. Kane further argues that the Sanskrit word "Pahlava" is the same as that used in Persian, and that it is the new form of the old term *Pruthu* or *Parthava*. It is true that Parthia (now known as Khorāsān) came to light only after the conquest of Iran by Alexander, but it is not impossible that this very Parthia should have been known in the *R̥g Veda* by its ancient name *Pruthu* or *Parthava*. Again, the terms "Pahlava" and "Pārsikā" are often used in association with the names of various other communities like the Sakas, Yavanas, Kambojas etc. in ancient Sanskrit literature, and this goes to support the theory that Pahlava and Pārsikā

must also be meaning a community — that of the ancient Persia. Persia are in fact known as Pahlavas and one of their ancient languages is known as *Pahlavi*. Pahlava also means a warrior and in the Persian language *pehlavān* bears the similar meaning of a champion. The inhabitants of Pahlava or Parthia were often at war with the Romans and had won renown as redoubtable fighters; and this was the main reason why the term Pahlava came to mean not only Persian but also a *pehlavān* or hero.

Coming from stray words in the *R̥g Veda* to the realm of legends, we find that even in hoary antiquity there had been intercourse between Iran and India, and relations, cordial or hostile, had always prevailed between these two countries. The famous legend of Yayāti and his two queens, Devyāni and Sharmishthā, is mentioned in full detail in the *Mahābhārata*. It appears that king Yayāti married the Asura princess Sharmishthā, daughter of the Iranian<sup>1</sup> king Vrishparva, whose kingdom bordered on that of Yayāti's own. By his two queens Yayāti had five sons — Yadu, Turvasu, Druhyu, Puru and Anu, the last two by Sharmishthā. They all became ancestors of famous races, but Puru by an act of filial piety succeeded to his father's throne. The first king known to fame among the descendants of Puru was Dushyanta, husband of Shakuntalā, immortalized in the drama of Kālidāsa. Their offspring was Bharat, who transmitted his name not only to his descendants but to the whole country, which even to-day glories in the name of Bhārata. One of the descendants of Bharat was Hasti, the founder of Hastināpura, the ancient capital of India. Hasti's great-grandson was Kuru, in whose line flourished the famous Shantanu, the father of the great Blīshma and the progenitor of the Kauravas and Pāndavas. It may thus seem that the remote ancestress of this illustrious dynasty, and of Bharat, from whom India derived its ancient name, was the

Iranian princess Sharmishthā. It must be admitted however that this inference is based not on authentic history but on a vague though thoroughly venerable tradition.

Passages from the Hindu epics, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*, can also be cited to prove the intercourse between the ancient Iranians and the Hindus. In the *Rāmāyaṇa* we come across Kaikeyi, the wife of king Dashratha, and daughter of Ashwapati, king of Kekaya, a kingdom on the frontiers of Iran. We have also seen in Chapter I that *Kaja* is the well-known prefix to the names of Kayāni kings of Iran like Kaiqubād, Kaikāoos, Kaikhusru etc. When Bharat with his maternal uncle Yudhājit went to meet his maternal grandfather, the latter favoured him on his return with numerous gifts, which comprised hounds, woollen raiments and the skins of antelopes. From these rather peculiar gifts, it may be inferred that the king of Kekaya did not belong to India proper but to some province bordering on India.

In the *Mahābhārata*, Gāndhārī, wife of the blind Kaurava king, Dhṛitarāshtra, was the daughter of the king of Gāndhār, which is now known as Qandahār. Another queen in the same epic is Mādri, a wife of Pāndu and mother of Nakula and Sahadeva. Mādri was so called because she was the daughter of the king of Madradesh, which, according to Sir M. Monier-Williams's *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, was situated to the North West of India on the frontiers of Iran. These three instances serve to show that even in that distant past the Hindus had some connection with Iran or the provinces adjoining that country.

A detailed examination of the Hindu epics and the *Purāṇas* will bear out the same conclusion. In the *Ādi Parva* of the *Mahābhārata* there is a legend of *Rishi* Vishwāmitra entreating *Rishi* Vasishtha for the gift of his cow Shabalā. The offer was rejected and the wrathful Vishwāmitra raised

a. powerful army with a view to dispossessing the rightful owner of his cow. The animal, however, by direction of her master Vasishtha, created from the fur of her skin a host of soldiers among whom were thousands of Sakas, Yavanas, Mlechhas as well as Pahlavas. This very legend figures in the *Rāmāyaṇa* also. Though couched in a fantastic form, the legend still demonstrates the possibility that even in those ancient times there was some contact between the Hindus and the Pahlavas (Parsis).

According to the *Sabhā Parva* of the *Mahābhārata*, king Yudhishtira, desirous of celebrating the great Rājsuya sacrifice, dispatched his brothers to conquer countries in all directions. One of his brothers Nakula is said to have vanquished the Berbers, Kirātas, Yavanas, Sakas as well as the Pahlavas who were compelled to pay tribute. In the same *Parva* of the *Mahābhārata* we read of a brilliant architect named Mayadānava, who built for Yudhishtira a grand palace of numerous pillars. This Mayadānava is said to be Magdānava, and Mag or Magwa means Iranian. In the *Udyoga Parva* of the *Mahābhārata* we read of king Drupad who at the commencement of the great war advised Yudhishtira to seek alliance with the Sakas and the Pahlavas. In the *Bhishma Parva* of the same epic we come across the names of several communities living in the North-West of India, and among them are mentioned the Pārsikās or Pahlavas.

In the *Vishnu Purāṇa* as well as in the *Harivamsha* of the *Mahābhārata* is recorded a legend that once the total destruction of the Sakas, Yavanas, Pāradas and Pahlavas was apprehended at the hands of Sagara. These terrified people thereupon approached *Rishi Vasishtha*, the *guru* of Sagara, and implored his help. At the *Rishi's* intercession they were saved but in punishment Sagara ordered the Yavanas to shave their heads completely, the Sakas partially,

the Pāradas to grow hair on their heads, and the Pahlavas to wear beards. From this amusing description also the connection between the ancient Hindus and Pahlavas (Parsis) becomes evident.

But it is necessary at this stage to enter a caveat that these references to the Pahlavas in the *Mahābhārata* should be received with great caution. The original of the *Mahābhārata* was a brief epic poem named "Jaya", said to have been written by a mysterious figure, Kṛiṣṇa Dwaipāyana Vyāsa, the contemporary of Sri Kṛiṣṇa, in the dawn of the Kali age c. 3100 B.C. From that time considerable additions and interpolations continued to be made to that work till the epic was transformed into an encyclopaedia and was finally redacted by the bard Ugrashravas<sup>6</sup>, popularly known as Sauti, sometime between 300 B.C. and 100 B.C. Scholars have however suspected certain interpolations having been made in the great epic even after this final edition. Such being the case, it is very hard to say whether the Pahlavas, referred to in the *Mahābhārata*, belonged to the hoary past or to Achaemenian times (6th to 4th centuries B.C.). Indeed the association of the Pahlavas with the Yavanas (Greeks), Sakas (Scythians), Mlecchas (non-Aryans) etc. would point to comparatively recent times. But though it is extremely difficult to determine the time of certain contacts between the ancient Iranians and the Indians from the *Mahābhārata*, still there can be no room for doubt that such contacts had frequently been established between the two people from pre-historic to modern times, as will be evident throughout this book.

We may now turn to classical Sanskrit literature for instances of such contacts between the two people. Kālidāsa in his epic of *Raghuvamśa* observes that when king Raghu, the ancestor of Rāma, started on his conquests, he attacked the Pārsikā cavalry and massacred the "bearded" Parsis.

Kālidāsa also records that the Iranian women were beautiful with their faces flushed with wine.

According to the *Manu Smṛiti* (compiled in the early Christian centuries), the Yavanas, Sakas, Pāradas, Kirātas, Pahlavas etc. were originally Kshatriyas but were degraded to the level of Shudras for their failure in the adequate performance of religious ceremonies.

In the centuries following the birth of Christ the connection between the Iranians and the Hindus seems to have continued. The mathematician Varāhamihir (6th century A.D.) observed in his *Bṛihatsamhitā* that the Pahlavas, Pārshwas, Kambojas, Yavanas etc. were neighbours of the Indians. Kumārila Bhatt (7th century A.D.) notes in his *Tantratārtika* that besides other languages the Pārsikā language was also being learnt in Asia.

There are references to the Parsis even in Sanskrit fiction and drama. Bāṇa in his well-known story *Kādambarī* (7th century A.D.) refers to a Pārsikā king presenting Tārāpida with a horse named Indrāyudh. In *Mudrārākṣasa*, a drama by Viśhākhadatta in the 8th century A.D., we read about the famous king Chandragupta Maurya being assisted by the Pārsikās. Somadeva Bhatt in his collection of stories named *Kathāsaritsāgara* (12th century A.D.) relates the slaughter of a wicked Pārsikā king. The unanimous testimony of these passages from Sanskrit epics, *Purāṇas*, history and fiction serves to confirm the ancient connection between the Iranians and the Hindus.

Turning now to ancient Iranian literature we find numerous references to India, but with this difference that when Hindu works have triumphantly recorded the defeats of the Iranians, the Iranians have in their books naturally gloried in their own victories over the Indians. This seems to be a weakness inherent in human nature. According to the *Āeen-i-Akbari* of Abul Fazl, king Hushang,

grandson of Kayumars, the primeval ancestor of Iran, was the first Iranian to land in India. His successor Jamshid, of illustrious memory, when defeated and pursued by Zohāk, is supposed traditionally to have fled to India. According to the *Shāhnāmah* of Firdausi, Zohāk had a premonition that a child named Faridun would grow up and be the cause of his destruction in the years to come. Zohāk was therefore anxious to slay the child, whose terrified mother Farānak fled with him to India. In the numerous *Nāmahs*, written in rivalry of the *Shāhnāmah*, we find that the famous hero Kershāsp, his nephew Narimān, Sām, son of Narimān, Zāl son of Sām, Rustam, son of Zāl, and Farāmarz son of Rustam had all been to India, and some had even scored victories in this country. According to the *Shāhnāmah*, the heroic prince Asfandiyār, son of king Kai Gushtāsp, had invaded India and propagated therein the newly-revealed religion of Zarathushtra. According to a work of doubtful historical value, the *Changranghāchnāmah* we learn that a scholarly Brahmin named Changranghānch had arrived in Iran with a view to holding a debate with the Prophet Zarathushtra, but that ere he opened his lips the Prophet had read his innermost thoughts and offered him satisfactory replies. The same story is related of the Greek philosopher Tutia-nush (Titianus). It is further stated that both the Hindu and Greek scholars renounced their faiths and accepted Zarathushtrianism. The details about these two scholars, however, remain entirely unauthenticated.

We have lingered long in the cloudy regions of legend and fiction and it is now time to come down to the *terra firma* of history. The historical connection between the Iranians and the Indians began from the times of the great Achaemenian king Darius Hystaspes (Dārā I), whose reign represents the summit of Iranian magnificence in the 6th



and 5th centuries B.C. Darius dispatched his Greek admiral Scylax to reconnoitre the North Indian region, and on the strength of the survey so made, Darius sent an army and conquered the Panjab in 512 B.C. In the vast empire of Darius the Panjab was the richest province, paying an annual tribute of 360 gold talents or one million pounds sterling, amounting to nearly a third of the revenue of the whole empire. The name of India naturally does not figure in the inscriptions on the rock of Behistun, carved in 516 B.C., four years before the conquest of the Panjab; but it does appear recorded on the walls of the royal palaces of Persepolis as well as on the "Naqsh i Rostam", where the fact was incised in 486 B.C., the year of the Great King's death. On the grand staircase of Darius's ruined palace at Persipolis can still be seen carved effigies of persons offering tribute to the Persian monarch from various countries, far and near; and among others are perceptible the figures of two Indians carrying gifts to the Emperor in the typical Indian fashion in their peculiar shoulder-baskets.

Even after the death of Darius satraps continued to be nominated by the Iranian government to rule over certain parts of India, and it is well within the limits of possibility that there must have been some Parsi population in North India at the time. According to Sir J. Marshall, Takshashilā (near Peshāwar), the chief abode of ancient Sanskrit lore with its famous university, was comprised in the conquest of Darius. Sir J. Marshall<sup>7</sup> had there discovered the site of a great fire-temple from which also one could infer a goodly settlement of Iranians in North India at the time. The same conclusion has been indirectly arrived at by V. A. Smith<sup>8</sup> who holds that the Ionic Jandila temple in the Sir Kap section of Takshashilā was a fire-temple, dating from about the beginning of the Christian

era. This receives further corroboration from a different source.<sup>9</sup> Philostratus (3rd century A.D.) quotes Apollonius of Tyana (1st century A.D.), who during his extensive travels had visited the sun-temple at Takshashilā, evidently the same as that referred to by the two historians.

Takshashilā was the capital of the North-Western portion of the Mauryan empire, where Ashoka ruled as viceroy during the lifetime of his father Bindusār. The local customs of that principality, noted by Strabo and quoted by V. A. Smith<sup>10</sup> were—polygamy, sale in open market of maidens who had failed to secure husbands in the ordinary course, and exposure of the dead to birds of prey. The first two customs are repugnant to Zarathushtrian religious ideals; but the disposal of the dead by being exposed to vultures is definitely an Iranian custom, still practised by modern Persis, and an unmistakable sign of the existence of an Iranian colony at Takshashilā during the viceroyalty of Ashoka in the 3rd century B.C.

Another trace of Iranian influence on Takshashilā can be found in the excavation there or in the adjoining locality of certain inscriptions written in the "Kharoshthi" script. V. A. Smith<sup>11</sup> observes that two of king Ashoka's inscriptions, both written in that script, have been discovered at Shāhbāzghari near Peshāwar and at Manserā in the Panjab. The Kharoshthi script, perhaps named after its founder Kharoshth, was borrowed from the Aramaic script: it was written from right to left, and its use by the Achaemenian Iranians in North-West India upto the 4th century A.D. has been proved. India had her own Brahmi script, written from left to right, but the very fact of two of Ashoka's inscriptions being carved in the Iranian Kharoshthi script reveals the close contact of the Iranians and Indians of the 3rd century B.C. The Punjab, conquered by Darius, remained under Iranian control till

the collapse of Iran before the might of Alexander in 330 B.C. King Xerxes, son of Darius I, invaded Greece in 480 B.C. in fruitless revenge for the disaster of Marathon. His huge army comprised soldiers from numerous provinces of his vast empire and included, according to Herodotus, Indian warriors "dressed in cotton raiment."<sup>12</sup> For a hundred years after Xerxes India was in close touch with Iran and through Iran with Greece.

Ctesias, the Greek resident physician in the court of Artaxerxes II (Mnemon) in the beginning of the 4th century B.C., was an uncritical historian, lacking in the sobriety of Herodotus and sometimes unable to distinguish fact from fable. Ctesias wrote a work on India known as "*Indica*."<sup>13</sup> It is clear that he could hardly have been able to do so had he not been kept well-informed about India by the Persian envoys and other officers sent to that country by the Great King, as well as by travellers and traders between Iran and India. This work on India by Ctesias unfortunately does not survive, except in the form of its epitome by Photius as well as in citations by other authors. Indian troops were found to be present at the battle of Arbela (330 B.C.), where the fate of Iran under Darius Codomanus, the last of the Achaemenians, was finally decided by the invincible sword of Alexander. Similarly Iranian soldiers figured in the army of Alexander during his conquest of the Panjab. In this period of unrest there may have been further settlements of Iranians in India, which had begun ever since the conquest of that country by Darius I.<sup>14</sup>

Let us now turn to the influence of Iran on the Mauryan dynasty. Chandragupta and his grandson Ashoka were Shudras: some historians consider them foreigners, while according to Dr. D. B. Spooner Ashoka was an Iranian. Under the patronage of Sir Ratan J. Tata, Dr. Spooner

carried on excavations in the field of Kumrahār near Pāṭliputra and unearthed a huge pillared edifice, whose architecture definitely resembled that of the royal Iranian palaces of Persipolis. A confirmation of this view may be found in V. A. Smith<sup>15</sup> who observes that the massive monolithic sandstone pillars of Ashoka, 50 feet in height, are Persian rather than Greek in style, and the mechanical execution is perfect. Particularly the bell-shaped capitals on Indian columns appear to be an imitation of those on Iranian pillars. Dr. Spooner also found considerable likeness between the rock-inscriptions of Darius I and those of Ashoka, and the likeness extended even to their expression.

The *Mahābhārata* describes a multi-pillared edifice built for King Yudhishtira by a capable architect named Mayadānava (probably an Iranian as observed previously). Dr. Spooner found considerable likeness between the architecture of Mayadānava's palace and that of Chandragupta's palace, as recorded by Megasthenes. Hence from the architectural point of view Dr. Spooner concluded that the Iranians had exerted considerable influence on the Indian kings of the Mauryan dynasty. Fergusson<sup>16</sup> also admits the resemblance between Iranian and Mauryan architecture. V. A. Smith, however, holds that the art of Ashoka is mainly Indian in both spirit and execution, though obviously affected by Persian and Hellenistic influences.

According to V. A. Smith,<sup>17</sup> the effigies of the four lions on the capitals of the famous column of Ashoka at Sarnāth near Benares and much of their design had been suggested by Iranian architecture, though he considered the pose and artistic presentation of the Indian lions better than the Iranian models. Sir J. H. Marshall<sup>18</sup> admits the Persian influence though he modifies it by the statement that it was the Hellenistic influence, nourished in Persia and especially in the satrapy of Bactria, that was responsible

for the modelling of the living forms on the Sarnāth capital, which is an exotic, alien to Indian ideas in expression and execution. Dr. A. U. Pope,<sup>19</sup> a renowned modern critic of art, maintains that the effigies of the four lions on Ashoka's columns at Sarnāth and the *Dharma-chakra* were in fact symbols of ancient Iran and could be seen in the Achaemenian ruins of Persepolis. This is borne out by the testimony of J. H. Iliffe<sup>20</sup> who observes that the famous capital at Sarnāth with four lions, seated back to back on a bell-shaped abacus, may have an Achaemenian ancestry. The adoption by the present Government of India of the figures of the lions on the Sarnāth column of Ashoka as national symbols must therefore be considered as a great though unconscious compliment to the architecture of ancient Iran, whose influence is thus indirectly immortalized centuries after it was actually exerted on India. It is an incident about which Parsis may legitimately feel proud.

Money was first coined in Lydia, a country in Asia Minor, conquered in 546 B.C. by Cyrus the great. It was in imitation of this metallic coinage that Darius I coined money, his gold coins being known as "Dārics" after his name. His silver coins were known as "sigloi", which, according to Sir P. M. Sykes,<sup>21</sup> is a corruption of the Hebrew word *shekel*. According to Dr. Dhalla,<sup>22</sup> there were no other gold coins then in the world except those minted by Darius I. J. H. Iliffe<sup>23</sup> maintains that the Persian coins influenced the punch-made silver coins of India. According to H. G. Rawlinson,<sup>24</sup> the Mauryas never developed a regular coinage of their own, but the Persian "Dārics" were freely circulated in India. It is on record that when Warren Hastings was Governor General in India, an earthen pot was discovered on the bank of a river in the province of Benares, containing 172 gold "Dārics". The

very presence of these "Dārics" is sufficient evidence of the influence exerted on India by the coins of Iran.<sup>23</sup>

The magnificence of the Mauryan court may possibly have been an imitation to a certain extent of the Iranian court, for there was a good deal of intercourse between Iran and India in those days. When Alexander conquered Iran (330 B.C.), its artists and craftsmen were scattered far and wide. It is highly probable that several of them should have subsequently arrived at the newly-founded Mauryan kingdom of Chandragupta (316 B.C.), and hence the Iranian influence on Indian architecture need not cause surprise. According to Fergusson<sup>24</sup> the Indian architecture of those times, being of wood, was not durable, and it is quite possible that Indians began the use of stone in imitation of the Iranians, and this conjecture gains support from the likeness observable in Indian and Iranian architecture. The practice of recording inscriptions on rocks was adopted by Ashoka from that of Darius I. Ashoka had fourteen rock-records to his credit, two of which, as seen previously, being in the Kharoshthi script, which was used by the Achaemenian Iranians. Ashoka during the reign of his father Bindusār was viceroy at Takshashilā where in all probability he came into intimate contact with the Iranians, particularly because there was, says H. G. Rawlinson,<sup>25</sup> a famous overland route between Takshashilā and Balkh.

The resemblance between Iranian and Indian architecture is undeniable, and Dr. Spooner rightly observes that it was Iran that had influenced India in that direction. The Iranian influence on the Mauryan dynasty and the people is thus noticeable in four ways: (1) in the "Kharoshthi" script prevalent on the border between Iran and India; (2) in the long-continued use of the Iranian word *kshatrap* (satrap); (3) in the likeness between the Iranian and

Ashokian rock-inscriptions; (4) in the resemblance between the Iranian and Mauryan architecture. According to Sir J. M. Marshall,<sup>28</sup> it was in Persia that the bell-shaped capital was evolved. It was from Persian palaces, still existing in ruins, that the smooth, unfluted shafts of the Mauryan columns were copied. It was from Persia again that the craftsmen of Ashoka learnt how to give so lustrous a polish to stone. It is to Persia that we must look for the Hellenistic influence which alone at that epoch of the world's history could have been responsible for the modelling of the living forms on the Sārnāth capital. V. Smith<sup>29</sup> frankly sums up the extent of the Iranian influence on India by his observation: "Whatever may be the fate of the various hypotheses debated by scholars, there can be no doubt that ancient India was largely indebted to Iranian ideals and practices".

But even all this does not suffice to transform Ashoka into a Parsi, and Dr. Spooner's other arguments in that direction appear to be quite unsound. Chandragupta had arrived from North-West India, established a kingdom with Iranian help and married a daughter of Seleucus Nikator; all this, in the opinion of Dr. Spooner, justified the theory that Chandragupta was an Iranian. But these facts are thoroughly insufficient to serve Dr. Spooner's purpose; nor must it be forgotten that Seleucus was not an Iranian but a Greek. Megasthenes, the Greek ambassador from Seleucus to the Mauryan Court, wrote an invaluable book on India in which he states that Chandragupta on ceremonial occasions washed his hair in public. Thinking this to be an exclusively Iranian custom, Dr. Spooner jumps to the conclusion that Chandragupta was an Iranian. This indeed is a very lame argument, for during the coronation of a king it is the custom among the Hīndus, Parsis, Jews etc. to "anoint" him by washing and applying oil

to his hair. This therefore is not peculiarly a Parsi custom as Dr. Spooner is inclined to think. Dr. Spooner derives the word "Maurya" from the city of Marv in Iran and considers this to be a further proof in support of his theory that Chandragupta was an Iranian; but in fact "Maurya" is derived from *Murā*, the name of king Nanda's mistress and the mother of Chandragupta, who denominated his dynasty from the name of his mother. According to another version, the dynasty was called Mauryan because that region abounded in "myurs" or peacocks, and had no connection with Marv, the Iranian city. All this indicates the weakness of several arguments advanced by Dr. Spooner to prove that the Mauryan royal dynasty was Iranian.

Mauryan coins are rarely, if ever, available, though Dr. Spooner recognizes the possibility of considering the oldest Indian coins as belonging to Mauryan times. These coins bear the stamp of the sun, bull and branch of a tree. Since these three objects are associated with the sacred ideas and rituals of the Parsis, Dr. Spooner again hastily accepts this fact also as supporting his theory. This argument, however, is not wholly futile, for the Parsis adore the sun, have the effigy of the winged bull on their fire-temples, and employ in their rituals a besom-like twig, known as the "barsam". But then the sun and the bull are also associated with Hindu religious worship in one way or the other, while the tree is the symbol of the Buddhist order. Hence it is unconvincing to hold that the Mauryan kings were not Hindus but Iranians.

According to C. J. Browne,<sup>30</sup> a few coins belonging to the end of the 4th century B.C. have been unearthed near Takshashilā, and it is clear that they were struck in that very place. Some of these coins bear the stamp of the lion. On the coins of Darius I that monarch is depicted as hunting the lion. It may be possible to hold that the



Indian coins, bearing the lion-mark, display traces of Iranian influence. C. J. Browne argues that the Indians must have learnt from the Iranians the art of minting coins by stamping a mould on molten metal. Dr. Spooner considers even this influence to be another weapon in his armoury, but it would be to go too far with him to hold that the Mauryan kings were for this reason Iranians.

Except in the drama of *Mudrārākṣasa* by Viśākṣadatta in the 8th century A.D., Sanskrit literature contains no references to Mauryan kings; there seems to be a conspiracy of silent contempt for these monarchs, whose achievements are however eulogized by the Buddhists. Kalhan Pandit in his historical work *Rājatarangini* gives the names of fifty-two wicked kings among whom figures the noble Ashoka. It is astonishing to find in this inferno of the wicked the name of this great ruler, who is rightly considered the glory of India as being the first in strictly historical times to establish a great empire in our country, and who is regarded by H. G. Wells<sup>11</sup> as the beau-ideal of rulers. Dr. Spooner thinks that it was because Chandragupta and Ashoka were foreigners that they were thus treated with indifference in Indian history; otherwise a net-work of legends would have surely been woven round their names as in the case, for instance, of Vikram, Bhoja and Prithvirāja. We, however, think it safe to argue that the injustice done in Indian history to Chandragupta and Ashoka was due to the fact that they were Shudras and not because they were foreigners or Iranians.

Dr. Spooner doubts that the Indian Machiavelli, Chāṇakya, the famous author of *Arthashastra* (Economics) and the minister of Chandragupta, was a Brahmin. In his opinion Chāṇakya was not an orthodox Brahmin but a devotee of the Atharva Veda, skilled in astronomy, music and medical science. Dr. Spooner further thinks him to be a foreigner,

and considering the fact that the Iranians of the day were well advanced in astronomy, admits the possibility of Chāṇakya having arrived in India from Iran. Historically however Chāṇakya was a Brahmin and his real name was Viṣṇugupta,<sup>32</sup> though he was called Chāṇakya from one of his ancestors. This famous diplomat was also known as Kautilya, but no one, except Dr. Spooner, has considered him an Iranian; and to make out that he was a foreigner and an Iranian just because he happened to be a student of the Atharva Veda is to distort history to suit one's cherished theory.

It is needless to refute the other theories advanced by Dr. Spooner. While reading some of them we are tempted in our bewilderment to exclaim, with Desdemona, "Oh most lame and impotent conclusion"! At the slightest resemblance Dr. Spooner betrays a tendency to rush to conclusions; and his peculiar fancy that Chandragupta and Ashoka were Parsis only reveals the tragedy of over-enthusiasm in research. Some of his other crotchets were that Buddha was an Iranian and that his teachings were derived from Zarathushtrianism; that the *Vedas* were composed by Iranian priests; that Magadha was a province of the Magi (Iranian priests); that the Scythians were Iranians; that Shakti-worship had also originated from the Magis etc! Indeed it is hard to say how far the learned Doctor would have been carried away by his craze of transforming every individual or institution into an Iranian product.

It would, however, be unfair to ridicule his theory in its entirety. It is true that there was intercourse between the Iranians and the Mauryans; that Mauryan architecture and its substitution of stone for wood were influenced by the

used in two inscriptions by Ashoka, was prevalent among the Achaemenian Iranians. It is also very natural to hold that the idea of world-wide kingship was adopted by Ashoka from the Persian empire, for the Greeks never had a world-sovereignty before Alexander, whose own vast empire collapsed within seven decades of his death. The greatest and most well-organized empire the world had hitherto seen was therefore the one carved out by the great kings of Iran, which the Mauryans may well have kept before their eyes. But even after admitting all this, Buddha does not become a Zarathushtrian nor Chandragupta and Ashoka, Iranians. Such miracles are uncommon in history, and Dr. Spooner's arguments, advanced with a view to working the miracle, will have to be consigned to the limbo of exploded speculations.

We shall now turn to another link in the long chain of historical connections between the Iranians and the Indians. In the *Bharishya Purāṇa* of the Hindus we read of eighteen sun-worshipping "Mag Brahmins" who came from Iran and settled in India. The Paurāṇic details are as follows: Once Sāmba, son of Sri Kṛṣṇa and Jāmbuvatī, happened to offend the irascible Rishi Durvāsā, by whose curse he fell a victim to leprosy. The disease being incurable, the court-sage Gauramukh was consulted. The sage pronounced the opinion that none but the sun-worshipping Magi, who lived in Shakadwipa<sup>33</sup> in the neighbourhood of Iran, had the power to cure the terrible disease. Sāmba thereupon flew on the eagle to Shakadwipa and returned with the Magi, for whom he built a sun-temple on the river Chandrabhāgā (Chinab) near Multan. Sāmba was cured by the prayers of these Magi.

There is a good deal of exaggerated legendary element in all *Purāṇas*, and this episode of the *Bharishya Purāṇa* is no exception to the rule: we shall however disentangle

the thread of history from the web of legend in which it is involved. This sun-temple in Multan was a historical reality: it had been visited by the famous Chinese traveller Houen Tsiang in the 7th century A.D. It was desecrated, though spared, in 712 by Muhammad Qāsim, the conqueror of Sindh, who according to Albiruni, had suspended a piece of cow's flesh from the neck of the idol of the sun-god. The temple was destroyed by the Shi'a Qarmatis (Carmathians), when they invaded Multan. Albiruni in the 11th century found a *Jāmi' Masjid* raised on the site. The Magi who settled in Multan are said to have married Kshatriya maidens of the Bhoja stock. These Magi were assimilated into the Hindu fold and were known as Mag Brahmins or Irani Brahmins.

We shall see further on that these Mag Brahmins must have arrived in India in the first century B.C. or A.D. If so, how could they be associated with Sri Kṛṣṇa's son and the Rishi Durvāsā, who flourished in the distant past? The answer can only be that the authors of the *Purāṇas* had deliberately distorted history and ignored chronology by foisting into this episode the great names of Sri Kṛṣṇa and the Rishi Durvāsā only with a view to augmenting the importance and interest of the story. Again, according to the *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa* eighteen Mag Brahmins had arrived in India. Now everywhere in Sanskrit literature we are faced with the number 18—for instance, there are 18 *Purāṇas*, 18 *Upapurāṇas*, 18 *Parvas* (books) of the *Mahābhārata*, 18 *Adhyāyas* (chapters) of the *Gītā*: the great war described in the *Mahābhārata* continued for 18 days with 18 Akshohini cohorts (huge divisions of the army) taking part in it; and, strange to say, the Mag Brahmins that came to India were neither more nor less than eighteen. It is possible that 18 is a sacred number among the Hindus, but what have sacred numbers to do with history? Historians have

finally arrived at the conclusion that more than eighteen Mag Brahmins must have migrated to India from Iran, on foot and not soaring on the wings of an eagle, not once but in successive batches.

The characteristics and customs of these Mag Brahmins will be found to be largely similar to those of the present day Parsis. The great guru and law-giver of the Mag Brahmins was named Jarshasta. (It is needless to say that this word is the same as Zarathushtra, the Prophet of ancient Iran). The Mag Brahmins tied the *Ayanga* or sacred cord round their waist. (This *Ayanga* is known as *Aiyāongha* in the *Avesta* and as *Kushti* in Persian: the Brahmins tie their sacred thread on the shoulder, the Parsis round the waist). The Mag Brahmins were sun-worshippers. (From ancient times to the present age this characteristic is common to the Parsis and the *Gāyatri*-chanting Hindus). The Mag Brahmins in their ceremonies used the twig known as "Barsam". (The Parsis use the same twig while the Hindus use a kind of grass known as "Darbha"). The Mag Brahmins observed silence during their meals. (Times have completely changed and at present speeches are delivered and toasts drunk to the health of various persons during dinner; but even to-day there are some orthodox Parsis who consider dining a sacred ritual and observe complete silence during their meals).

The Mag Brahmins used to wear beards. (This has now become a matter of individual choice, though Parsi priests can still be found to grow beards). The Mag Brahmins tied the *padān* on their mouths. (Even to-day the Parsi priests tie a kerchief called *padān*, known in the *Avesta* as *paitidān* on their mouths, to prevent the spray of saliva from falling into the sacred fire during prayers. This kerchief is larger than the one called *moomti*, used by the Jaina monks to cover their mouths, and after prayers the Parsi

priest folds it up in his turban). The Mag Brahmins during their ceremonies held a long-handled ladle. (It is still used by Parsi priests while offering sandalwood, frankincense etc. to the fire). The Mag Brahmins were divided into Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. (It is well known that Jamshid, the father of Iranian civilization, had divided his people into four classes — Āthravans or priests, Ratheshṭārs or warriors, Vāstrayoshas or agriculturists and Hutokshas or labourers, but, except the Āthravans, none held hereditary rights). The Mag Brahmins attached great importance to personal cleanliness and took regular baths: their women during their menses secluded themselves from society. (The Zarathushtrian religion is fundamentally based on purity — physical, mental and moral). From all these characteristics it is clear that the Mag Brahmins who arrived from Iran were Zarathushtrians.

Still they cannot be called staunch Zarathushtrians because they were considerably influenced by Hinduism. Instead of believing in Ahuramazda and the Ameshaśpentās (archangels mentioned in the Zarathushtrian religion) they worshipped Mihr (Meher, Mithra, Mitra or the Sun), and this form of heliolatry was very prevalent during the Parthian regime. The Mag Brahmins also believed in idolatry, a practice denounced in Zarathushtrianism. According to M. P. Khareghat,<sup>14</sup> the Mag Brahmins worshipped not only Mihr but other Zarathushtrian angels like Sarush (known among them as Sroshāya) and Rashnu (called by them Ragnāya). Besides, the Mag Brahmins, having married Kshatriya women, were soon merged in the Hindu religion.

Let us now determine the approximate age of the advent of the Mag Brahmins into India. We would have been spared this trouble if only the *Bharṛishyā Purāṇa* had cared to denote the time of that occurrence, but, as previously observed, its author was so devoid of historic sense as not

only to ignore the age but even mislead the readers by introducing into the narrative the names of Sri Krishna and Durvāsā. But it is needless to deplore this lapse. Sir R. G. Bhandarkar<sup>35</sup> argues that after the fall of the Achaemenians at the hands of Alexander in 330 B.C., the Parsis were scattered in various directions, carrying with them the message of sun-worship. Mithraism (worship of Mithra or sun) was prevalent in Iran as well as in Rome two centuries before Christ; it is therefore possible that about this time some Parsis may have come over from Iran to India with their custom of heliolatry. We arrive at the same conclusion on an examination of this question from a different angle. It is on record that the Parthian king Vologeses I had ordered in the first century B.C.<sup>36</sup> a collation of the scattered Zarathushtrian scriptures and had thereby created an awakening among the adherents of that faith. According to Sir R. G. Bhandarkar, in his work quoted previously, the great Indo-Scythian Buddhist king Kanishka of the Kushāṇ family was reigning in North India in the 1st century B.C. with Peshāwar as his capital.<sup>37</sup> The coins of the time bear the effigy of "Mihir" (sun), which indicates the possibility of a trace of Zarathushtrian religion or custom even in the reign of this Buddhist king. All this leads to the probable conclusion that the Mag Brahmins must have arrived from Iran to India in successive batches from the second century B.C. to second century A.D.

We shall now review the influence of the Mag Brahmins on India. According to K. N. Sitaram,<sup>38</sup> the influence of the Mag Brahmins was considerable in the 6th century A.D., when the Iranian form of sun-worship was in full swing in India. Sitaram holds that king Harshavardhan (A.D. 606-648), his father Prabhākarvardhan, his father Ādityavardhan and his father Rājyavardhan were all sun-worshippers and

descendants of Mag Brahmins. It is also significant that "Prabhākar" and "Āditya" are names of the sun. Sitaram asserts that the famous Indian astronomer Varāhamihir of the 6th century A.D. was a Mag Brahmin, and that he had referred to his Mag Brahmin ancestors in his works. From his father's name Ādityadās (meaning servant of the sun) and from the fact that Varāhamihir dedicated his great work, the *Bṛhatsamhitā*, to Mihir (Mithra or the sun), Sitaram concludes that the astronomer was in some way connected with the Mag Brahmins. In this respect a shrewd argument has been advanced by J. E. Sanjana,<sup>39</sup> who invites our attention to a certain verse of a Zarathushtrian scripture, named the *Meher Yasht* (Yasht X), according to which, while Meher (the sun) advances, he is accompanied by Verethraghna (Vritrahaṇa or Behrām) in the form of a "varāz" (varāha or boar). From this Avestan passage one can see the close connection between Varāha (boar) and Mihir (sun), which words go to form the name of the Hindu astronomer, and thus support the theory that he was a Mag Brahmin. Numerous minor sects came to India and were merged into Hinduism, and without the help of historical research their whereabouts could scarcely be traced. So too a limited number of Mag Brahmins arrived in India and lost their identity completely in Hinduism as the river loses her separate existence when her waters are merged in the ocean.

We may now turn to certain provinces between Iran and India, once under Iranian and Zarathushtrian influence, then under the sway of Greek culture when conquered by Alexander and ruled over by Seleucus Nikator and his descendants, and finally dominated by Buddhism and the culture of India. One of the greatest provinces under the Achaemenian kings was Bactria which extended from the Hindu Kush to the Oxus and is at present part of



Afghanistan. Alexander settled the Greeks in this Zarathushtrian province, and it was pre-eminently in Bactria that the Greeks and Iranians established an understanding which was both cordial and durable. The break up of the Seleucid empire in the West and of the Mauryan empire in the East gave the Bactrian Greeks their chance and they ruled 2000 years ago for about two centuries in the North West of India till they were overthrown by the Scythian tribes of the North. These Bactrian Greeks were however Greek only in name, having little to do with Greek culture and rarely turning to Greece for inspiration. Rather these Indo-Greeks became in a short time as thoroughly Indianised as the Mag Brahmans were. Many of them embraced Buddhism, introducing Indian legends in Indian script on their coins. In 256 B.C. Antiochus, the grandson of Seleucus, had entered into a treaty with the great king Ashoka, but between 181 and 161 B.C. the Greco-Bactrian kings found themselves strong enough to ignore the treaty and send invasions into the Panjab, Sindh and Cutch. But they founded no kingdoms, and the only traces they left in India were in the form of their valuable coins, still preserved in the museums of India.<sup>40</sup>

The greatest of Indo-Greek kings was Menander who aspired to play the part of another Alexander. From his capital of Kabul he invaded India (second century B.C.), conquered the Doab territory of the river Indus and captured the city of Mathura. The safety of Pataliputra was threatened, but in a terrible battle Menander was finally repulsed and forced to return to his own kingdom. The name of Menander (Milinda) is, however, famous for his dialogue with the Buddhist monk Nāgśena, reported at full length in the "Milinda panho", a scripture of the Hinayāna Buddhists. Soon after Menander's death his empire disintegrated.

Other great centres of Hindu-Buddhist culture, beside Bactria, were Bāmyān, Khotan, and Kuchī, where the Sanskrit language and Hindu philosophy were regularly studied. The greatest king after Ashoka was Kanishka,<sup>41</sup> ruling over the Kushāṇ people, who like the Parthians had originated from Iranian nomads. The Kushāṇs with their capital at Peshāwar had annexed all Bactria and had extended their conquests as far as the left bank of the Indus. The brief but very eventful career of the Kushāṇ dynasty came to an untimely end when it was conquered by Shāhpur I of the Sasanian dynasty in the early years of his reign A.D. 240-271. But the most important occurrence of King Kanishka's life was his acceptance of Mahāyāna Buddhism, which had begun to spread peacefully and extensively even beyond India. The Kushāṇs and Bactrians through their acceptance of Buddhism were influenced by the literature, science, architecture, medicine and philosophy of India.<sup>42</sup> How powerful though peaceful was the sway of Buddhism could be judged from the archaeological excavations at Bactria, Bāmyān, Khotan, Mirān, Turfān and Tun-huang, revealing a mass of Buddhist literature. Again, relics of numerous *stupas* (domed reliquaries enshrining Buddha's relics) and *vihāras* (monasteries) have been discovered at Khotan, an important centre of learning, and the surrounding regions.<sup>43</sup> At last in the 9th century A.D. these small kingdoms were absorbed in Islam.

During the Parthian regime various foreign tribes, associated with Iran and her people, came to India and were fused with the Indian population. In the first century A.D. some families, bearing Persian names, are found settled in Western India, patronizing Brahmins and Buddhists alike. The Kārlā and Nāsik cave-inscriptions indicate that Harapharan, son of Satapharan, gave away a cave-hall, surrounded by nine cells, to the Mahāsanghikā branch of

Buddhist monks.<sup>44</sup> According to S. K. Hodiwala,<sup>45</sup> this Harapharan was a Zarathushtrian, though he subsequently embraced Buddhism. According to J. Fergusson,<sup>46</sup> the influence of Iranian architecture is clearly traceable in the rock-hewn Kārlā caves of the Bombay Presidency. According to Sir J. N. Sarkar,<sup>47</sup> Ushavadata (Rishavadatta), son-in-law of the satrap Nahapāna (another Iranian name), gave away three lacs of cows (*sic*) and sixteen villages to the Brahmins and lavished various other gifts on them. These foreign settlers were quietly but completely absorbed in the mass of the Hindu population.

It is not easy to trace the connection between Iran and India and determine the important landmarks during the twilight that prevailed in the annals of the two countries in the early pre-and post-Christian centuries, but we shall have to content ourselves with stray instances from the nooks and corners of history. We have it on the authority of the writer of the *Periplus*<sup>48</sup> c. A.D. 70-80 that the Parthian king Menander exercised his sway in distant Saurāshtra and that his coins were current in Broach in the first century B.C. This numismatic evidence should suffice to show that Menander had extended his power right up to Broach, evidently an important maritime centre in those days.

The vast empire of Darius Hystaspes was divided into twenty *satrapies*, each controlled by a *satrap*, who was a provincial governor or a viceroy. The *satrap* was usually a man of high birth who remained in office for many years, if not for life. At some periods the office became in practice hereditary, though in theory terminable at the king's will. As was inevitable, on the decline of the central power the *satraps* developed a tendency to independence which only facilitated the dismemberment of the empire. After the conquest of the Persian empire by Alexander, the *satraps* assumed independent authority at Mālāvā, Saurāshtra, Cutch,

Sindhi and other places, acknowledging the suzerainty of the Iranian empire — first of the Parthians and later of the Sasanians — till they felt strong enough to dissociate themselves from the centre and rule in their own name. The sway of these *satraps* in India is attested to by the discovery in Saurāshtra and other places of Parthian coins dating from the beginning of the Christian era, bearing the stamp of the fire-pan, the unmistakable sign of the Iranian rulers.<sup>49</sup> The Kshatrapas (*satraps*) worshipped the sun and fire, and on their coins the king was depicted with the Macedonian helmet on the obverse, while the sun, moon and the fire-altar figured on the reverse. This clearly shows the Iranian *cum* Hellenic influence on the Kshatrapas after the Alexandrian conquest.

In the history of Gujarat the period of three centuries beginning from A.D. 78 is known as the Kshatrapa (*satrap*) period.<sup>50</sup> The Kshatrapa rule in Gujarat extended from A.D. 78 to c. 400 when it was replaced by Bhattārka, the commander-in-chief and the first ruler of the Maitrak dynasty of Gujarat.<sup>51</sup> The first Kshatrapa ruler of Gujarat and Saurāshtra was the Iranian Nahapāna of the Kshaharāta family which ruled in Western India as *satraps* of the Kushāṇ dynasty. The Saka Era is said to have commenced from A.D. 78 in the regime of the *satrap* Nahapāna in West India, and was superseded by the older and orthodox Samvat Era, beginning from 56 B.C., when the Guptas exercised their sway in that territory. It was only then that the Saka Era was discontinued in Gujarat, though it still persists in South India even at the present day.<sup>52</sup> If it could be decisively settled that Nahapāna started the Saka Era, it would serve to show the tenacious hold of an epoch, inaugurated by a ruler of Iranian extraction, on an important section of the Hindus. Nahapāna left no male descendant and his kingdom was conquered by the Āndhra king Gautamiputra Shatakarni in about A.D. 126. The next prominent Kshatrapa to invite our attention is

Chashtana, who soon regained the conquered territories from the king of Āndhra. Chashtana was succeeded by Jayadaman and he by the famous Kshatrapa Rudradāman, the greatest of Kshatrapas and one of the greatest kings of Gujarat. He was a man of powerful and magnetic personality who about A.D. 150 ruled over a vast domain which included Sindh, Mālwa, Gujarat and Saurāshtra. He was also a scholar, well-versed in various subjects and keenly interested in music and the fine arts.

Gujarat had once been a province of the Mauryan empire and Ashoka had his fourteen famous edicts carved on Mt. Girmār near Junāgadh. Near that rock, a large irrigation lake named Sudarshana had been constructed about 310 B.C. by Pushyagupta, the viceroy of Chandragupta Maurya. For agricultural purposes conduits were constructed to allow the water to escape, and the work was accomplished on a right royal scale by the Yavanrāj Tushaspa, the governor of Ashoka, in about 260 B.C. A terrible cyclone, however, destroyed these constructions in the Shaka year 72 (A.D. 150). But the embankment was restored by orders of the Mahākshatrapa Rudradāman in the same year or very soon after, and the same ruler commemorated the achievement by a Sanskrit inscription in which he refers to his provincial Pahlava governor Suvishākha, who ruled over Anarta and Saurāshtra (Northern and Southern Kāthiāwar), and who carried out the actual work of restoration.

Now, according to Dr. Bhau Daji, this Suvishākha is in all likelihood a Sanskritized form of the Iranian name Siavush. The Yavanarāj Tushaspa, who constructed the conduits to the lake, must have been, judging from his title, a nobleman of high rank. He is called a Yavana and he must therefore have been a non-Hindu, but, from the close resemblance of the name Tushaspa with Iranian names like Kershāsp, Gushtāsp, Jāmāspa etc., still in use

among modern Parsis, one can naturally argue the possibility of Tushaspa being an Iranian noble of high degree. Thus two Iranian names could be seen in the inscriptions at Mt. Girnār near Junāgadh. Rudradāman had a son Dāmaysādā, and the latter part of this word, as shrewdly observed by Dr. D. C. Sarkar,<sup>55</sup> represents the Persian word *zādeh*. These names lend support to the theory of there being a sprinkling of Iranian population at the time in Saurāshtra. This theory receives confirmation from the Bombay Gazetteer according to which the trade connection between the Persian Gulf and the western sea-board must have led to the settlement from very early times of the Pahlavas in West India.

It is difficult to establish the identity of the Mahākshatrapa Rudradāman. *Kshatrapa* or *satrap* is, as observed previously, the designation of the viceroy of the ancient Iranian empire. He assumed the title of *Mahākshatrapa* when he started to reign independently during the decline of the empire. Rudradāman was evidently a foreigner, and his name seems to be the Sanskritized form of an alien word. After Rudradāman there were about twenty-two kings, some of whom called themselves *Mahākshatrapas*. The sway of the *Kshatrapas* declined with the rise of the Guptas *c.* A.D. 310 and was finally extinguished by the great king Chandragupta II (known as Sakāri Vikramāditya) *c.* A.D. 395. In the same year Western India, including Gujarat and Saurāshtra, was annexed to the Gupta empire. The *satraps*, though at first foreigners, had in time yielded to the assimilative power of Hinduism, assumed Hindu names, and become professedly at least converts to some form or other of the Hindu religion.

The fact that Iranians had settled in India in the first and second centuries A.D. receives fresh corroboration from the *Manu Smṛiti*, the remoter limit of whose date is fixed by

Dr. Buhler<sup>54</sup> at about the commencement of the second century A.D. or somewhat earlier. According to the *Manu Smṛiti* X 43-44, as noted previously, the Kambojas, Yavanas, Shakas, Pahlavas etc. were some of those races which, originally of Kshatriya descent, were degraded to the condition of Shudras in consequence of their omission of the sacred rites and their neglect of the Brahmanas. Dr. Buhler thinks it certain that the word "Pahlava" was used in India at the beginning of the first century A.D.

According to the Greek historian Arrian (2nd century A.D.), king Mithridates I, the true founder of the Parthian empire, who reigned from 171 to 138 B.C., had extended his conquests to the river Indus and subdued the territory between the rivers Indus and the Jhelum. About 95 B.C. an Indo-Parthian king named Maues or Mogā asserted his power over West Punjab and assumed the title of Emperor. His successors Azes I (1st century B.C.) and Gondophernes (1st century A.D.) were the chief Indo-Parthian kings who reigned in the Punjab as feudatories of the sovereign Parthian power in Iran. The borderland areas of India like Kābul, Qandahār, Seistān, etc., which were meeting-places of Indians and Iranians, were known in latter Parthian times as *Indikē Leukē* or White India. It is not improbable, as observed by Prof. M. S. Commissariat,<sup>55</sup> that the two powerful dynasties of the Western *satraps*, associated with the names of Nahapāna and Chashtana, which ruled vast tracts of India from the end of the first century of the Christian era onwards, had strong affinities with the Parthians, though in course of time they were absorbed in Hinduism.

Some scholars maintained that the famous Pallavas, with their capital at Kānchi, as great in South India as the imperial Guptas were in the North, were foreign intruders and probably a branch of the Pahlavas or Parthians of

North Western Iran. This view was once held by V. A. Smith in his *Early History of India* (1904), but in his later work *Oxford History of India* (1919) he revised his opinion and expressed the view that the Pallavas were not Pahlavas, as the similarity of their names would naturally suggest, but that they belonged to the ancient Nāga race of India. This latter view, being the result of further research and thought on the subject, must be considered more acceptable.

Writers on early Christianity have agreed that St. Bartholomew and St. Thomas, two of the twelve apostles of Christ, were dispatched soon after the crucifixion, to preach the Gospel in the East. Thomas is well known in Christian history as "doubting Thomas" on account of his disbelief in Christ's resurrection until he had received personal proof (*cf.* John XX 24-29). St. Thomas is said to have founded the Church in Parthia and then come over to India where he reached Takhashilā and was hospitably received at the court of the Pahlava king Gondophernes, referred to above. There are many conflicting legends associated with the life, activities and martyrdom of St. Thomas.<sup>36</sup> The version given by Prof. H. G. Rawlinson<sup>37</sup> is that the missionary labours of Thomas were interrupted by foreign invasions, and he was therefore compelled to flee to South India where he founded the Church in Malabar in the year 52. This small colony was reinforced later on by Christian refugees from Persia during the persecutions in the reign of Shāhpur II in the 4th century. Their settlement satisfactorily accounts for the existence of the stone crosses with undeciphered Pahlavi inscriptions found at St. Thomas's Mount near Madras and other places in the Madras Presidency. St. Thomas had built a modest church known as St. Thomas's Mount at Madras, only seven miles from Mylapore where he lies buried. In



the course of ages it had fallen into ruins, but a shrine was constructed on the mount by the Portuguese in 1547. While digging the foundations of the old site, the famous stone Cross of St. Thomas, engraved with the Pahlavi inscription, was unearthed. Now Pahlavi was not only the language of Iranian Zarathushtrians but also of all who lived in Iran during the Parthian and Sasanian regime. The Pahlavi inscription on the Cross thus reveals that a group of Iranian Christians must have accompanied St. Thomas in his missionary career through India.

R. B. Paymaster<sup>18</sup> quotes the Egyptian trader Cosmos Indicopleustes, who visited India in the first half of the sixth century A.D. and who refers to grants of land made to the Iranian Christians in documents in Tamil, countersigned in Pahlavi. The same writer also refers to the Parsis as the chief traders in the Indian Ocean.

Dr. J. J. Modi,<sup>19</sup> however, quotes the authority of Dr. Burnell according to whom the earliest Christians to come to India were Iranians of the sect of Māni, who preached his creed in the reign of Shāhpur I in the 3rd century A.D. It is interesting to note that they raised a Church near Madras with inscriptions in their Pahlavi mother-tongue. Dr. Burnell further believed that there was in South India a city named Mānigrām or city of Māni. Whoever the settlers were—whether Christians of the first or fourth century or Manichaean Christians belonging to the third century, they were sons of the soil of Iran as judged by the Pahlavi inscriptions they have left behind in South India. These Iranian Christians have no connection with the Zarathushtrian refugees who migrated from Iran after the Arab conquest and settled in Western India, as narrated at length in Chapter III. Further research in the matter of these undeciphered Pahlavi inscriptions is eagerly awaited by students of Iranian lore.

S. K. Hodiwala<sup>60</sup> asserts that the Iranians were afraid of sea-voyages, but that their fear of the sea disappeared during the Parthian regime, when the Iranians carried on maritime trade from the Persian Gulf to the coast of Thānā on Western India. According to Ferishta, the famous Muslim historian of the Deccan, an Indian king named Sisarchand paid tribute to a Parthian king named Gudarz.

Wilford<sup>61</sup> sees the possibility of Iranian blood flowing in the veins of the Konkanasth Brahmins of South India. But the theory of the enlightened Chitpāvan Brahmin community of Mahārāshtra being of Iranian origin has now been almost given up. Scholars now maintain that the fair-complexioned, grey-eyed Chitpāvans are the descendants of Egyptian Jews who hailed from Africa and were shipwrecked and cast ashore on the Sahyādri hills as early as the 3rd or 4th century A.D.<sup>62</sup>

We may now review Indo-Iranian contacts regularly from the establishment of the Sasanian dynasty by Ardshir Bābkān (A.D. 226-240), who is said to have extended his conquests to the borders of India. Though this statement is not accepted by Palanji B. Desai,<sup>63</sup> still references are found in history to Sasanian rule over some portions of India. The Kushān power was waning in the third century A.D. and according to V. A. Smith,<sup>64</sup> a Kushān coin of the period has been discovered, presenting the king, clad in the royal garb of Persia, manifestly imitated from the figure of the Sasanian king Shāhpur I, who ruled Iran from 240 to 271. Smith explains the Persianizing of the Kushān coinage of North India by the possible occurrence of an unrecorded Iranian invasion. But this conjecture is unsupported by further evidence, and Smith infers that the invasion, if it really took place, must have been the work of predatory tribes, subject to Iranian domination, rather than a regular attack by the Iranian king.

In the reign of Shāhpur I, son of Ardāšir Kāwān, there flourished an eminent painter named Māni (born 215), who, as an aspirant of the truth, first embraced Christianity, and then, renouncing it, started an eclectic faith of his own, which was an amalgam of various elements, culled from Zarathushtrianism, Buddhism but largely from Christianity. He managed to convert the Prince (Piruz) to his doctrines, and through him was able to seek admission into the court of Shāhpur I on the very day of his coronation, and there amidst general attentiveness he made a public announcement of his creed. Being apprehensive of the break-down of the recently established religious and political solidarity of Iran, Shāhpur proclaimed Māni a heretic and banished him from the country. Māni thereupon set out on his travels and it is interesting to note that according to Al-Bīrūnī,<sup>45</sup> he preached his faith in India, Tibet and China. On his return to Iran he was flayed alive by orders of Behrām I in 272 — the very first year of his brief reign.

Prof. Hertzfeld asserts in his *Paikuli*<sup>46</sup> that Behram II (276-292) made extensive conquests, extending to countries of the Middle and Lower Sindhu region and even including Cutch, Kāthiāwār and Mālhwā. But this view is based on the very much damaged Paikuli inscription, unearthed by him, referring to the list of independent kings who personally attended the coronation of the Iranian king Narsi in 293. Dr. R. C. Majumdar<sup>47</sup> therefore thinks it safe to admit that Behram II had established his supremacy in the lower Sindhu Valley and had political intercourse of a friendly character with Indian principalities in the interior, but that there was no valid ground to assume that Kāthiāwār, Gujarat and Mālhwā were his vassal states.

Prof. Hertzfeld, as stated above, recently unearthed a Pahlavi inscription from the ruins of a palace built at

Paikuli by orders of the Sasanian king Narsi (293-301). That inscription gives the names of the tributary kings who attended the coronation of king Narsi, and among them we find the names of several Indian kings. According to the famous historian Tabari, the great Sasanian king Shāhpur II (309-379) had built cities in Sindh, which must have been part of his extensive empire.

It appears that during the Sasanian regime several princes of the blood royal in Persia, before their accession to the throne, had been appointed imperial vicegerents under the titles of Gurgānshāh, Sakānshāh, Kushānshāh, Kermānshāh etc., indicative of the regions and the tribes over which their authority extended.<sup>68</sup> Thus the Kushānshāh was overlord of the Kushān princes of Bactria, of the Kabul valley and the Panjab, whose coinage shows distinctly Persian characteristics. The Sankānshāh's authority extended over all the Saka princes of Sakastān (Seistān), eastwards into India where the Western satraps held sway over Rajputānā, Mālwa and Saurāshtra, including large parts of the Bombay Presidency. The Gurgānshāh was in charge of Gurjistān (Georgia) and adjoining territories.

The famous Sasanian king Behrām V (420-440) was Herculean in physique and astonishingly skilful as a toxophilite. His miraculous feats in archery are interestingly narrated by Firdausi. He was named Bahrāmгур because of his fondness for hunting the *gur* or onager. According to Firdausi, Behrāmгур in the disguise of his own envoy visited the court of the Hindu king Shangal<sup>69</sup> of Kanouj in India. Seeing his marvellous exploits Shangal was afraid that if an ambassador was so powerful, the renowned king Behrāmгур must have been considerably more formidable. Shangal's daughter Sapinud became enamoured of Behrāmгур and the two were privately married. Their descendants are said to have been famous in Indian history by the name

of Gardabhlilā Rajputs. Behrām is well known as *gur* (wild ass), and the word *Gardabhlilā* may have been derived from the Sanskrit *gardabh* (ass); and the resemblance between the derivations of these two words from two different languages is remarkable. But this explanation of the origin of the Gardabhlilā Rajputs, resting as it does on such a frail basis, cannot be accepted as historically authentic. According to Firdausi, king Shāngal, knowing Behrāmgur's fondness for poetry and song, dispatched with him 12000 Luris or minstrels to Irān, and the place where they settled in that country is called Luristān. It is commonly believed that these Luris are the ancestors of the gipsies. Phirozeshah R. Mehta of Karachi has refuted this belief in an elaborate article on the subject.<sup>70</sup>

According to S. K. Hodiwala,<sup>71</sup> coins named "Gadhayyā Paisā", resembling Sasanian coins, have been discovered in the Konkan. Their connection with Iran may be inferred from the stamp of the fire-pan which they bear. We have seen that the word "Gur" in king Behrāmgur's name means a wild ass: this goes to confirm the opinion that the "Gadhayyā Paisā" (ass money) was in some way connected with king Behrāmgur. The last Umayyad king Merwān II, who was defeated in the battle of Zāb in A.D. 750 by the 'Abbasides, was also eulogistically called "Al himār" (the ass) for his great strength and endurance. Still the "Gadhayyā Paisā" cannot be connected with Merwān II but only with Behrāmgur, for these Indian coins bear the effigy of the fire-pan, and fire is the symbol of Zarathushtrianism, not Islam.

The Sasanian empire is the most brilliant page in Iranian history and represents the culmination of Iranian glory. Its duration 226-651 happily synchronized with the great Gupta dynasty of India (308-544), the classic period of Sanskrit literature and the golden age of Hinduism in

pre-Islamic times. As Sardar K. M. Panikkar<sup>72</sup> observes: "From the point of view of literature, religion, art, architecture, commerce and colonial development this (Gupta) period is undoubtedly the most important in Indian history." From the cultural history of nations we find that Iran has not only influenced other countries but has also served as an efficient intermediary for the transmission and exchange through itself of various cultural ideas of East and West." As R. Ghirshman<sup>74</sup> observes: "For centuries Iran had maintained friendly relations with the Indian State of the Gupta, which finally achieved a national unity and inaugurated a period of renaissance in Hindustan. Towards this State Iran acted as an intermediary for the transmission of Western values. During the "Golden age" of Indian civilization the friendship and economic and cultural exchanges between the two countries brought India into contact with Western ideas and introduced her to Western medicine, astronomy, geometry and logic."

The Gupta period ended in A.D. 544: the Sasanian power threw in the plenitude of its glory for about a century longer, and the connection with India continued to be even more intimate than what it was in the past. The contact between Iran and India attained its climax in the times of Naushirwān (531-579), the most illustrious of Sasanian monarchs. The rise of the Rajputs is usually dated c. A.D. 600. According to a legend,<sup>75</sup> Bāppā Rāval or Kāl Bhoj, the chief progenitor of the Rajputs, had married a daughter of king Naushirwān. It is said that once Bāppā Rāval participated in a dance with several maidens, when in a playful mood he desired to be united to all of them by a mock wedding ceremony. But the ceremony subsequently turned out to be a genuine one, and the unfortunate trifler with dalliance found himself suddenly embarrassed with a fairly large bevy of wives, through whom he however

became the father of several Rajput clans. Some writers are of opinion that Bāppā Rāval had himself been to Iran. From all this we may be tempted to believe that one of his wives may have been a daughter of Naushirwān. But Col. Tod<sup>76</sup> himself gives A.D. 712 as the birth-year of Bāppā Rāval, while according to Pandit G. Oza,<sup>77</sup> his rule extended from 734 to 753. Since the dates of Bāppā Rāval and Naushirwān do not tally, the legend immediately breaks down, for it is impossible that the Indian hero, who flourished in the 8th century, could have married a daughter of the Iranian monarch, who died in 579. It is within the limits of probability, however, that Bāppā Rāval may have married an Iranian princess after the Arab conquest of Iran; but mere conjectures cannot command the weight of history. It may be noted in this connection that, according to Abul Fazl, the *Rāṇās* of Mewād trace their descent to Naushirwān. The tradition of the descent of the *Rāṇās* of Mewād from Naushzād, son of Naushirwān, is still current in India, though it remains uncorroborated by Indian historians.

Cultural relations were also cultivated between Iran and India as they were between Iran and other countries in the reign of Naushirwān, who was himself an author, a devotee of philosophy and a magnanimous patron of learning, presiding at the great intellectual centre established by him, known as "Jund-i-Shāhpur". We shall however deal with the cultural aspect of his reign only in so far as it is connected with India. Naushirwān, we are told, had come to know of a miraculous Indian herb which was said to revive the dead, and he thereupon asked his physician Barzu to fetch it from India. But all Barzu's endeavours ended in disappointment, till he was asked by an aged Indian pandit to give up his fruitless attempts, for education, said he, was the only means to revive the "dead",

and the gift of knowledge was the gift of life itself. The pandit further suggested that in the library of a certain Indian king there was a book named *Kalileh wa Damaneh*, so "full of wise saws and modern instances" as may be supposed to revive the "dead". Barzu procured this life-giving miracle from the Indian king and took it to Iran, where it was translated into Pahlavi by order of Naushirwān. This very work is famous as the Fables of Pilpai or Bidpai; in fact it is a collection of stories whose origin is traceable to that inexhaustible mine of wisdom known as the *Panchtantra*.<sup>78</sup> In this great Sanskrit work, as in *Aesop's Fables*, beasts are made to talk in human language, and the stories are highly didactic and instructive. The Pahlavi version of the times of Naushirwān is lost, but from it was prepared an Arabic translation by Ibn Muqaffa' after the Arab conquest of Iran. The *Panchtantra* has been translated into sixty different languages, and it is not possible to keep a record of books that were inspired by this great work. The poet Rudaki rendered Ibn Muqaffa's Arabic translation into Persian verse, but its most famous version in Persian literature was the prose rendering of Maulānā Husain Wā'ez Kāshefi of the 15th century. This book, dealing with *Kalileh* and *Damaneh*, was named by its author *Amrār i Suhaili* (the lights of Canopus) from the name of his patron Amir Shaikh Ahmad as Suhaili.

It was in the reign of Naushirwān that the game of chess was introduced into Iran from India. As related in a brief Pahlavi work—the *Mādīgān i chatrang*<sup>79</sup> (account of chess), this game was invented in India and dispatched to Naushirwān by the tributary Indian king Devsāram (Devasharmā?) through a pandit named Takhtāritus with a challenge for its solution: in case of failure to unriddle the game, Devsāram claimed exemption from the tribute and even demanded a quarter of the Iranian revenues as



tribute for himself. The best brains of Iran were applied to the game in vain, which yielded at last to the ingenuity of the prime minister Buzurjmehr, who amidst general astonishment and applause determined the importance, position and movement of every piece on the chess-board, and, further, proved his proficiency in the matter by defeating Takhtārītus in twelve straight games. But this was not all, for Buzurjmehr himself invented a new game, based on Zarathushtrian theological concepts and named it "Vin i Ardshir", in honour of king Ardshir Bābkān, the founder of the Sasanian dynasty. Buzurjmehr personally took his game to India and demanded its solution. Since the Indians were unable to interpret the riddle posed by the Iranian sphinx, king Devsāram paid twice as much tribute and revenue as was formerly asked of him, and the minister returned home, richly rewarded and honoured for his intelligence. Firdausi in the *Shāhnāmeh* gives us almost the same version with minor changes in details.

The Sanskrit word for chess is *chaturang* and we find almost the same word in the Pahlavi treatise written about it, referred to above. When the Arabs conquered Iran, they were unable to pronounce this word, for the Arabic alphabet has no letters corresponding to "ch" and "g", which were therefore changed into "sh" and "j" respectively. Thus *chaturang* was transformed in the Arabic language into *shatranj*, which word is perfectly familiar to us in Persian and even in several Indian languages as the equivalent to chess. Once again India invented but Persia popularized all over the world, this time, one of the most intellectual forms of recreation, meant for those who can command both brains and leisure in ample measure, to devote to what has been happily described as the king of games and the game of kings.

In the reign of Khusru Parwiz (590-628), the grandson of Naushirwān, we notice an incident of political

significance between Iran and India. In the earlier half of the 7th century a great Chālukyan king, named Pulkesi II was as powerful in South India as king Harsha was in the North. Harsha had conquered various kings, but in trying to measure strength with Pulkesi II he tarnished his victorious career by the only defeat he sustained in his life. According to the Muslim historian Tabari (838-923), an ambassadorial deputation had been dispatched by Pulkesi II to the court of king Khusru Parwiz of Iran in 625, and from there in return an embassy was sent to the Indian king. This embassy has been depicted in a large fresco in Cave No. I at Ajanta, the Iranian envoys being represented as presenting their credentials. The effigies in the picture seem to be apparelled in Sasanian attire. This fresco is not only valuable as an historical landmark but also as a standard enabling scholars to determine the dates of the other important pictures at Ajanta.<sup>80</sup> King Khusru Parwiz is noted in history for his love of luxury and magnificence. In the reign of this voluptuous monarch, as previously in that of king Behrāmgur, several Indian minstrels of both sexes came and settled in Iran.

It appears that gold and silver coins of Khusru Parwiz were struck at Multān, depicting on the obverse the bust of that monarch and on the reverse the effigy of the sun. -As is well known sun-worship was prevalent at Multān, where a temple of the sun near the river Chināb was built by the Mag Brahmins, as observed previously. It is possible that these coins may have been introduced into India by the Huns. Coins of the Sasanian type, bearing inscriptions in Nāgari and Pahlavi, have been found in North West of India. According to Prof. E. J. Rapson<sup>81</sup> they were almost certainly struck by some representative of the Sasanian power ruling in Sindh and Multān.

Dr. Majmudar<sup>12</sup> finds traces of kings of Kābul and Zabul whose conquests extended to North India in the 7th century. From the coins of one Vāsudeva, bearing legends in Sasanian Pahlavi and Indian scripts, we find that he was a ruler of Bahman (Brāhmanābāh?), Multān, Tukan, Zabulistān and Sapardalaskhān (Sapadlaksha?). Another ruler of the same region and almost the same period was Shāhi Tigin, called the master Takān of Khorāsān in the Pahlavi legend and supreme lord of India and Iran in the Indian script. But in spite of their grandiloquent designations nothing very definite can be asserted, as observed by Dr. Majmudar, about them or their rule.

Col. Tod<sup>13</sup> observes that the Parthians and Scythians had helped the king of Sindh in the demolition of Valbhipur, *a city to the East of Saurāshtra, then under the rule of Shilāditya VII*. According to the historian Elphinstone, a Sasanian force had gone to the help of the king of Sindh to bring about the destruction of Valbhipur. But it seems this is not the ultimate end of Valbhipur, and there is a difference of opinion as to the final capitulation of the city. V. A. Smith<sup>14</sup> thinks it possible that Valbhipur was destroyed by the Arabs who swooped down upon it from Sindh c. 770. Dr. H. G. Shastri<sup>15</sup> comes to the conclusion that Valbhipur, then under the rule of the last Maitrak King Shilāditya VII, was attacked by sea by the Arabs and demolished with the members of the royal family in A.S. 845 (789 A.D.). Even if either of these two dates is accepted, it is evident that there could be neither Parthians nor Sasanians to help the king of Sindh at the time, and hence the opinions of Tod and Elphinstone stand refuted. The ultimate extinction of Valbhipur may have been wrought by the Arabs, but from the dates it appears that the Iranians could in no way be connected with the event.

King Harshavardhan of Kanouj in the first half of the seventh century was another Ashoka in respect of his conquests, munificence, tolerance and patronage of Buddhism. Like Akbar he was fond of holding meetings of theologians and listening to their learned discourses. But unfortunately there were exceptions to his rule of toleration when any individual or class rashly attempted to tread over his Buddhistic corns. V. A. Smith<sup>86</sup> cites a legend, narrated by Tārānāth, the Tibetan historian of Buddhism, according to which king Harsha does not seem to be as much a model of toleration as he is usually supposed to be. According to the story, Harsha built near Multān a great monastery where teachers of strange religions were lodged hospitably for several months. At the end of the period, however, he set fire to the building, thereby destroying "twelve thousand followers of the outlandish system with all their books." This story remains unauthenticated by further evidence, but V. A. Smith, accepting the likelihood (though not the certainty) of the occurrence, holds that a large number of Zarathushtrians and their books must have been destroyed by this treacherous deed. The event must have occurred, if the story be true, just before or during the Arab conquest, when Iran was torn by civil dissensions or foreign aggression, and was at the lowest ebb of her fortune. We thus find traces of a fairly large colony of Iranians in India in the reign of king Harsha in the first half of the seventh century.

We have already reviewed the extent of Parthian ascendancy over parts of India during the duration of its rule, and the same expansionist policy was continued by the Sasanians, whose advance towards the east started about A.D. 250. As Dr. A. S. Altekar<sup>87</sup> observes, it was about this time that Bactria and Afghanistan were annexed, and the crown-prince was sent to govern the new provinces

with the right to issue coins in his own name. Kshāh chiefs were permitted to rule as feudatories of the Sasanian power. We have already referred to the annexation of Seistān and Sindh by King Behrām II. The Saka chieftains were permitted to rule in a feudatory capacity, and the crown-prince, who was in charge of the Saka territory, was empowered to issue coins with the title of Sakān Shāh. In the opinion of Dr. Alickar, the Sasanian sway cannot be said to have prevailed over the Panjab, Gujarat and Kathiawar, as no Sasanian coins have been recovered in those territories. But, as observed previously, the Sasanian crown-prince, known as Kshāh Shāh, had in fact extended his power even over the Panjab, whose coinage revealed Persian characteristics, while the Sakān Shāh's authority had prevailed over the Western *Satrap*s, who ruled over Rajputana, Malwa and Saurashtra, including large parts of the Bombay Presidency. Even assuming the scarcity of Sasanian coins in the Panjab, Gujarat and Kathiawar, the prevalence of a friendly political intercourse between the Iranian government and the rulers of these principalities can hardly be disputed. History thus reveals to the patient investigator the long line of political, social and cultural relations that existed between Iran and India during the Parthian and Sasanian regime.

We have thus found a clear and more or less continuous connection between the Iranians and the Hindus ever since they separated in pre-historic times at the conclusion of the Indo-Iranian age till the middle of the seventh century A.D. It was then that Iran was suddenly darkened by the cataclysm of the Arab conquest which deluged the country with bloodshed and carnage unparalleled so far in her annals. But even after the Conquest the contact between the two countries continued; its description must however be delayed till we consider the important question

of the migration of a fairly large group of Iranians to India, which is the subject of the third Chapter. The last Chapter will pursue the theme still further and, it is hoped, make it undeniably clear that there has been considerable intercommunication between Iran and India ever since their inhabitants lived together as one race in the very dawn of history right down to modern times.

### NOTES

1. "India in the Avesta" in *Asiatic Papers Part II* by *Shams ul 'Ulamā* Dr. Sir Jivanji J. Modi
2. *Vide* his Preface to *Parsis of Ancient India* by S. K. Hodiwala
3. *Vide* his article in the *Iran League Quarterly* 1945.
4. *Vide* his contribution to the *Dr. Sir J. J. Modi Commemoration Volume*
5. *Mahābhārata-a Criticism* by C. V. Vaidya
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Guide to Taxila* by Sir J. Marshall: quoted in *Ancient Iran: its Contribution to Human Progress* by P. P. Buhara
8. *Oxford History of India* by V. A. Smith
9. *History of India as told by its own Historians* by Elliot and Dowson: Vol. V: Appendix
10. *Early History of India* by V. A. Smith
11. *Ibid.*
12. Incidentally it may be observed that Herodotus has also referred to the extremes of heat and cold in 'the Panjab, and to the existence of gigantic Indian ants, guarding gold, which must remain one of the most intriguing puzzles in the history of our country.

13. *Vide Cambridge History of India* Vol. I. Chap. XIV by Prof. A. V. W. Jackson
14. *Tārīkh i Shāhān i Irān* by Palanji B. Desai Vol. II (Gujarati)
15. *Early History of India* by V. A. Smith
16. *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture* by J. Fergusson
17. *Oxford History of India* by V. A. Smith
18. *Cambridge History of India* Vol. I: Chap. XXVI by Sir J. H. Marshall
19. Stated in an interview given in Bombay and recorded in the Gujarati daily paper, *Jām i Jamshīd* of 17th January 1948
20. *Vide* his contribution to *The Legacy of Persia* edited by Prof. A. J. Arberry
21. *History of Persia* by Sir P. M. Sykes
22. *Zoroastrian Civilization* by Shams ul 'Ulmā Dastur Dr. M. N. Dhalla
23. *Op. cit.*
24. *India* by Prof. H. G. Rawlinson
25. Prof. F. Max Muller in his *India: What can it teach us?* observes that this scholar-cum-administrator Warren Hastings sent the Dārics to the Court of Directors, who revealed their appreciation of numismatics by probably sending them to the melting pot! At all events when W. Hastings returned to England, the Dārics had disappeared.
26. *Op. cit.*
27. *Op. cit.*
28. *Cambridge History of India* Vol. I: Chap. XXVI by Sir J. H. Marshall
29. *Oxford History of India* by V. A. Smith
30. *The Coins of India* by C. J. Brown
31. *Outline of History* by H. G. Wells
32. Kautilya's *Arthashāstra*: translated with Introduction by R. Shamashastri

33. Several scholars have identified this Shakadwipa with Shakastān or Seistān.

34. *Vide* M. P. Khareglat's Preface to *Parsis of Ancient India* by S. K. Hodiwala

35. *Vaishnavism and Shaivism and Other Sects* by Dr. Sir R. G. Bhandarkar

36. *Tārīkh i Shāhān i Irān* by Palanji B. Desai (Gujarati)

37. The era of king Kanishka has long been the subject of controversy, but now there is a fair agreement among historians that he ruled from 76 to 102 A.D.

38. "Iranian Influence on Indian Culture": an article by K. N. Sitaram in the *K. R. Cama Institute Journal*

39. "Varāhamihir - an Iranian name": an article by J. E. Sanjana in the *Dinshah J. Irani Memorial Volume*

40. *Brief History of the Indian People* by Sir W. W. Hunter

41. For the age of Kanishka see note 37

42. *India and China* by Sardar K. M. Panikkar

43. *The Vision of India* by Sisirkumar Mitra

44. *India Through the Ages* by Sir J. N. Sarkar

45. *Parsis of Ancient India* by S. K. Hodiwala

46. *Op. cit.*

47. *India Through the Ages* by Sir J. N. Sarkar

48. Dr. D. C. Sarkar in *Age of Imperial Unity* (Bhāratīya Vidyā Bhavan).

49. *Tārīkh i Shāhān i Irān* by Palanji B. Desai Vol. II (Gujarati)

50. *Vide* Introduction by Prof. Rasiklal C. Parikh to the *Kāvyānushāsana* of Hemachandrasuri: Part II

51. *Maitrakālīn Gujarāt* by Dr. Hariprasad G. Shastri (Gujarati)

52. *Gujarāt no Sanskritīc Itihās* (Cultural History of Gujarat) Part I by Ratnamanirao Bhimrao (Gujarati)



53. *In Age of Imperial Unity* (Bhāratiya Vidyā Bhavan)
54. *Vide* Dr. Buhler's Introduction to *The Laws of Manu* in the Sacred Books of the East Series.
55. *A History of Gujarat* by Prof. M. S. Commissariat: Vol. I
56. *Early History of India* by V. A. Smith
57. *India* by Prof. H. G. Rawlinson
58. *Early History of the Parsis in India* by Rustam B. Paymaster
59. *Irāni Vīshayo* (Iranian Studies): Part III by *Shams ul 'Ulamā* Dr. Sir J. J. Modi (Gujarati)
60. *Parsis in Ancient India* by S. K. Hodiwalla
61. Quoted in *The Parsis in India* by M. M. Marzban: Vol. I
62. *Vide Vaidic Samfatti* by Pandit Raghumandan Sharmā (Hindi)
63. *Tauārīkh i Sāsānīān* by Palanji B. Desai (Gujarati)
64. *Early History of India* by V. A. Smith
65. Quoted in *A Literary History of Persia* Vol. I by Prof. E. G. Browne
66. Quoted by Dr. R. C. Majmudar in *The Classical Age* (Bhāratiya Vidyā Bhavan)
67. *Ibid.*
68. *History of Gujarat* by Prof. M. S. Commissariat: Vol. I
69. According to the historian Ferishta, the name of this king was Vāsudeva.
70. *Vide* his Gujarati article—"Mānavjagat nā udtā pankherā" (the flying birds of the human world) in the Special Number of the "Sānj Vartamān" 1944.
71. *Parsis of Ancient India* by S. K. Hodiwalla
72. *A Survey of Indian History* by Sardar K. M. Panikkar
73. *Iran and its Culture* by F. C. Davar
74. *Iran* by R. Ghirshman

75. *Vide Rājasthān* by Col. Tod

76. *Ibid.*

77. *Vide Rājputānā kā itihāsa* by Pandit Gaurishankar H. Oza (Hindi)

78. *Vide* Introduction to the *Panchtantra* by the translator and editor Dr. Bhogilal J. Sandesra (Gujarati)

79. *Mādigān i Chatrang* translated by Dastur Peshotan B. Sanjana

80. *Early History of India* by V. A. Smith

81. *Vide Indian Coins* by E. J. Rapson, and *Sasanian Coins* by F. D. J. Paruck: both quoted in *History of Gujarat* by Prof. M. S. Commissariat: Vol. I

82. In *The Classical Age* (Bhāratiya Vidyā Bhavan)

83. *Op. cit.*

84. *Early History of India* by V. A. Smith

85. *Maitrakālīn Gujarāt* by Dr. Hariprasad G. Shastri (Gujarati)

86. *Early History of India* by V. A. Smith

87. Dr. A. S. Altekar's contribution: "The Extent of the Sasanian Political Domination in India" in the *M. P. Khareghat Memorial Volume*.

### CHAPTER THREE

## MIGRATION OF THE IRANIAN PILGRIM FATHERS TO INDIA.

THERE are times when individuals or races are seized with a passion of hatred or revenge, abhorrence or extermination, that nothing can appease. The Romans of the second century B.C. could not be satisfied with anything short of the entire deletion of Carthage from the map, and Cato the Censor often concluded his speeches in the Senate, with little regard to relevance, with the words *Delenda est Carthago* (Carthage must be destroyed). Voltaire, the champion of anti-clericalism and rationalism, carried on against the Catholics of the 18th century a vitriolic campaign of vilification, summed up in his words *Ecrasez l'infame* (crush the infamous). Dr. Karl Marx, the scholar-fanatic and father of Communism in the 19th century, could never boast of a glib tongue, but with cutting disdain he fulminated against the capitalists whom he denounced as "bourgeois", the one word significant of the deepest mental and moral degeneracy in the proletarian lexicon. So too the Arabs, who suddenly rose to fame from their desert home in the 7th century A.D., were inspired with an unquenchable ardour to propagate their faith; and, fired with the lust of conquest and plunder, they charged with irresistible might the countries of the "unbelievers", offering them the choice of "the Qurān or the sword".

Two of the grimmest tragedies in the history of Iran are its conquest by Alexander in 330 B.C., and then, after the lapse of nearly a millennium, by the Arabs in A.D. 651. The power and faith of Iran, which had received a

It is not easy to extricate the pearl of history from the shell of legends with which the names of the other daughters are encrusted. One of these princesses, known to tradition as Mherbānu or Khātunbānu, anxious to preserve her virtue from the pursuing Arabs, is said to have been swallowed up by the merciful mountains near Yezd. The third daughter Māhbānu is said to have seen the wisdom of abandoning the motherland and fleeing to India with a few faithful companions. Abul Fazl in his *Āʿen i Akbari* records the tradition that Māhbānu married a Hindu prince and became the ancestress of the Sisodiyas of Udaipur, the bravest and most famous among the Rajput families. When a box of invaluable gems is destroyed, a precious pearl or two may fall into the hands of kings and adorn their diadems: so too the imperial House of Sāsān was overthrown, but the few drops of royal blood that were preserved from the catastrophe might have led to the establishment of the distinguished families of the Sayyads and the Sisodiyas. The career of Firuz and Behrām, the two sons of king Yezdegard, does not concern us here, for their destinies were associated with countries other than Iran or India.

The flame of Zarathushtrianism was smothered but not totally extinguished by the atrocities of the Arab conquest. The study of that faith and the observance of its rituals ran underground and were kept up by its zealous followers clandestinely for many years. It was during these dark days, posterior to the conquest, that the Dasturs composed some important Pahlavi-Pāzend works, like *Dinkard*, *Bundehishn*, *Mainyo i Khard* and the *Shikand Gumānik Vijār*. This literary activity was particularly prominent in the reign of Khalīf Māmun (A.D. 813-833). The author of the *Shikand Gumānik Vijār* (or the Doubt-dispelling Treatise) was Mardān Farrukh, son of Ormazd-dāt. This work, according to *Dastur*

Dr. Dhalla,<sup>2</sup> is the only work that has reached us which can be termed philosophical. Its learned author was ever anxious to augment his knowledge, and with that object, as he himself says, he travelled far and wide and crossed over to India.<sup>3</sup> He is among the earliest scholars in post-Islamic Iran to come over to India and thus start an ever-lengthening chain, whose links were forged in both countries and which has continued unsnapped to the present day, as will be described at length in Chapter IV.

In Chapter II we have noted numerous instances of Iranian settlements in India ever since its conquest by Darius Hystaspes. We have also observed in the same chapter that during the Parthian and Sasanian regime there had been instances of Iranian *satraps* and chiefs who gradually asserted their independence from the central power in Iran. Resuming the thread of this narrative we find that the same state of affairs continued even after the Arab conquest. It appears that even in the 8th century there were several Parsi colonies in Sindh, Saurāshtra, Gujarat, Rajputana etc., for relics, engravings and coins pertaining to those provinces are being continually unearthed.

A reliable instance of the existence of a Parsi colony in India may here be quoted from a poem of the 8th century. The poet Vākapati had written between 700 and 725 a historical poem in Prākṛit named "Gaudvaho"<sup>4</sup> to celebrate the defeat and slaughter of the king of Gaud (Upper Bengal) by Yashovarmā, king of Kanouj, who was the patron of the author. In this poem Vākapati also refers to a well-contested battle, fought in 695 between king Yashovarmā and the Pārsikās, living in the neighbourhood of Saurāshtra and Sindh, and states that in that battle many of the Pārsikās were slain. The poem bears traces of exaggeration, but its importance lies in its description of a contemporary event—the defeat of the Pārsikās. It also

serves to show that in the closing years of the 7th century there were Parsis near Saurāshtra and Sindh, whose numerical strength was sufficient to enable them to offer resistance to a powerful monarch.

According to Cunningham<sup>5</sup> a Pahlava (Parsi) king named Krishna (*sic*) was ruling c. 720 in Ilāpur or Somanāth.

Mas'udi, the Muslim historian, observes that in his own times (10th century) there were fire-temples in Sindh and Hindustan.

According to Westergaard,<sup>6</sup> there was a settlement of Parsis in the 10th century on the banks of the Indus in the city of Uchh in the Panjab. In the 12th century, observes the same Avestan scholar, a Zarathushtrian priest named Mahiyār of Uchh had started for Yezd in Iran for further studies in his religion. He returned in 1184 with a copy of the *Vendidad*, translated into Pahlavi by the Iranian Ardshir Behman, this being the first copy of the Pahlavi *Vendidad* to be seen in India.

Ibn Haukal, the geographer of the 10th century, also observes that in his times the Gabrs (Parsis) lived in Sindh and India.

The famous Albiruni of the 11th century had sojourned in India and in his history<sup>7</sup> has referred to the Parsis who had settled in this country.

There is a strong possibility that the terrors of the Arabs and, still later, of the Ghaznavide Turks may have driven some Iranian Zarathushtrians by the land route to seek shelter in North India. Bakshi Nizāmuddin Ahmad in his *Tabaqāt i Akbari*, Maulānā Ahmad and others in *Tarikh i Alafi* and Ferishta, the well-known Deccani historian<sup>8</sup>, substantially agree that Ibrāhim Ghaznavi, son of Mas'ud and grandson of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni, had in 1079 conquered Dera, a city in North India, largely populated by Iranians who, we are told, were banished from their

mother-land by Afrāsiyāb,<sup>9</sup> but who had preserved their ancient rites and customs and refrained from intermarriage with other communities. Ibrāhim ordered the surrender of the city and acceptance of the faith of Islam by the citizens. The Iranians repudiated the humiliating terms: Derā was thereupon taken by assault and one hundred thousand persons were carried into captivity to Ghazni. Whatever may be thought of the tall figures of the captives, set forth by these historians, it is clear that long after the Arab conquest there was a large population of Zarathushtrians in North India, which was far away from and had presumably little to do with the great settlement of the Iranians in Western India, which will form the subject of the present chapter.

Another instance of a different Iranian settlement may now be cited from the *Malfuzāt i Taimur*<sup>10</sup> (Memoirs of Taimur), in which that conqueror, known in history as Tamerlane, towards the end of the 14th century, refers to the village of Taghlaqpur in North India, inhabited by fire-worshippers, who followed the "perverse creed of two gods named Yazdān and Ahriman". (It is evident that the persons referred to were Zarathushtrians: the so-called theory of Dualism, its "perversity" and the propriety or otherwise of its applicability to Zarathushtrianism need not detain us here). Taimur states that the settlement of these "heretics" was destroyed by him and their forts and dwelling-places were razed to the ground.

Taimur then refers in his *Memoirs* to his terrible onslaught in 1398 on the capital of India, Delhi, where Hindus and Gabrs (Parsis) had congregated in large numbers with their families and belongings from the neighbouring districts. Taimur admits that the Hindus and Gabrs displayed great valour but they were ultimately massacred to a man. Taimur then moved on to Meerut where the fort was defended, among others, by a Gabr named Safi, reinforced

by a large number of his co-religionists. In the engagement that followed Sāfi was killed, but even Taimur is compelled to appreciate his conspicuous bravery. Then followed the usual scene of carnage which permitted none to escape from the tiger's ferocity. All the Gabrs were slaughtered, their wives and children enslaved and their houses plundered and levelled to the ground. This scourge of God then passed on to Hardwār, but even here we find that the opposition was led, as Taimur himself says, by Gabrs, though P. B. Desai<sup>11</sup> hesitates to believe that there were so many Parsis even in this celebrated place of Hindu pilgrimage. Hardwār fared no better and Taimur then turned to Kashmir to convert this earthly paradise into an inferno. The king who offered resistance here was Behruz, evidently an Iranian name, but, says Taimur, the Kāfir Gabrs broke and fled, leaving the field to the triumphant Ghāzis (Muslim soldiers fighting non-Muslims). But the fugitives were pursued and exterminated and holocausts were raised to gladden the eyes of the conqueror. Taimur's ravenous appetite was not appeased but rather stimulated with bloodshed and he was not a man to leave things half done.

He penetrated into Nagarkote in the Kangra Valley and even here we are told he was confronted by a large force of Gabrs, serving in the Hindu army. Resistance however was of no avail, and Hindus and Gabrs were both hurled into the jaws of destruction. The last scene of desolation was Jammu, where Hindus and Gabrs tried to evade battle with the Tātārs with a view to tiring out their patience. But by a clever stratagem of pretended flight, Taimur lured out his enemies, who were suddenly overwhelmed and decimated. These extracts from the *Malfuzāt i Taimur* are deliberately given at some length only to show that even at the close of the 14th century there was a very large



population of Parsis in Northern India, the descendants of those who had escaped from Iran by land after the Arab conquest, and had no connection with their co-religionists who had migrated from Iran by sea and settled in Gujarat. Some writers, doubting the existence of such large numbers of Parsis in Northern India, are inclined to believe that Taimur used the word "Gabr" as a synonym for non-Muslim. But this interpretation is untenable, for Taimur never uses the expression "Hindus *or* Gabrs" but always "Hindus *and* Gabrs", thus leaving no room for doubt that he meant "Gabrs" to mean what it actually signifies — fire-worshippers only. In view of these facts we can safely conclude that there were many large settlements in North India of Parsis, who from time to time suffered from the outrages of Muslim conquerors.

Even to the present day in North India, says P. B. Desai,<sup>12</sup> we come across the descendants of the ancient Parsis, though they are not acknowledged as such, for they have lost all connection with their Zarathushtrian religion and Iranian culture. On the authority of Prof. Dawson, Desai argues the possibility of recognizing the present-day Gabrs of Rohilkhand, the Magyas of Mālhwā and the Māghs of Taghlaqpur, who live secluded from other communities, as scions of the old Iranian stock. The Māghs of Taghlaqpur are, according to Captain Wilford, the followers of Māni, the Iranian religious reformer of the 3rd century A.D. From a study of the social and religious customs and beliefs of these people Sir J. Campbell<sup>13</sup> infers that they must have been the descendants of the fire-worshippers of Iran.

Badāyuni,<sup>14</sup> the historian of the times of Akbar, refers to the destruction of fire-altars in 1504 by the fanatic Sultan Sikander Lodi, the founder of Agra.

Abul Fazl<sup>15</sup> in the *Ā'in i Akbari* refers to the Gabri language as one of the thirteen languages used in the *subah*

of Kabul. He observes that there was a tribe called Gobri in North India and from their customs they seemed to be descendants of the Gabrs (fire-worshippers) who had found a refuge in North India. All these instances make it undeniably clear that after the fall of Iran there must have been repeated cases of exodus from that country by land and settlement in North India, which had no connection at all with the flourishing colony of Iranians on the shores of Western India. These isolated settlements of Iranians in North India were overwhelmed by fanatic Muslim conquerors, and hardly a trace of them is left, except in some obscure page of history to be ferreted out by the researcher. By way of contrast it is gratifying to turn to the Iranian Pilgrim Fathers, who threw themselves on the mercy of a Hindu king in Gujarat, and whose descendants, owing to the hospitality and tolerance evinced to them, are still a flourishing community in Western India, secure in their religious freedom, to preserve which they had reluctantly abandoned the motherland. As against the stray historical instances of Iranian settlements in North India, there is a host of witnesses, Muslim and Christian, who have referred to the well-known settlement of the Iranians in West India, to their faith, ceremonies, customs, professions, characteristics etc. in unmistakable terms. It is needless to fill these pages with names, most of them of European travellers of the 17th century, from whose accounts the great importance of the Iranian settlement in Western India becomes immediately apparent.

The surging humanity of India has ever absorbed her colonists and sometimes even her casual conquerors. We know that the Pahlavas and Mag Brahmans were merged into the Hindu fold before the Arab conquest of Iran. We also find from history that the Scythians and the Yueh Chih who drove them into India, and the Kushāns, who

were a class of Yuch Chihis, and the Ephthalites or White Huns, who even ruled for a brief while in Northern India and were a menace to the Guptas, settled down in different places in this country and were swamped in the ocean of Indian humanity by being absorbed gradually either by the Brahminical or the Buddhistic religion.

How then can we account for the existence of a handful of Parsis in India, and particularly on the west coast of this country? Unfortunately we know little of the history of the Parsis subsequent to their exodus to India, for, except a few stray notes, no continuous historical account of the Parsis after their exile from Iran has come down to us. What survives is the small but well-known Persian poem of 864 lines entitled *Qisseh i Sanjān* (episode of Sanjān), written in 1599 by a Parsi priest of Navsari named Belman Kaiqobād Hormazdyār Sanjānā. The relevant facts of the poem are as follows: When the Arabs conquered Iran, some pious souls escaped from the turmoil and established themselves for a hundred years at Kulistān (mountainous region, evidently of Khorāsān). Finding the Arab menace too imminent, they started for the port of Hormuz, where they settled for fifteen years; but the conditions still being disquieting they resolved to quit their beloved home. At the advice of a sagacious *Dastur*, well versed in astrology, a large group of Parsis with women and children sailed away from Hormuz and came to Div in Western India, where they stayed for nineteen years. Even here they were not destined to dwell in peace, for, according to one account,<sup>16</sup> Div was subjected to the depredations of the Muslims, and once again at the direction of the wise *Dastur* they sailed away in search of a safer place. During their voyage they encountered a terrible storm and offered prayers to God vowing to raise an Ātashbehrām (the cathedral fire-temple or highest type of fire-temple) if their lives were

spared. Their prayers were granted and they happened to land at Sanjān near Surat, at that time under a Hindu king named Jādi Rāṇā, who generously vouchsafed them the protection they needed and the necessary facilities for the construction of the Ātashbehrām.

It is true that the author of the *Qisseh i Sanjān* was not a person of scholarly attainments and his knowledge of history was defective; for instance, he dates the Arab conquest of Iran only a thousand years after Zarathushtra's promulgation of his religion. If this statement be accepted, the era of Zarathushtra would almost coincide with that of Alexander the Great — a ludicrous anachronism. According to the *Qisseh Ardshir Bābkān* ascended the throne of Iran only 300 years after Alexander, whereas the difference between the two was more than five centuries and a half. The *Qisseh i Sanjān* even contains grammatical mistakes. A detailed examination of the *Qisseh* has been made by S. H. Hodiwala.<sup>17</sup>

Even the date of the advent of the Parsi exiles to India is uncertain, though several dates, ranging from 716 to 936, have been suggested by scholars. The date traditionally accepted by the Parsis is 716. The calculation mentioned in the *Qisseh* would point to 785 as the date of the Iranian arrival at Sanjān. B. T. Anklesaria and Dr. M. B. Devar suggest 850 as the date of the landing. K. R. Cama, S. H. Hodiwala, F. D. J. Parakh and I. J. S. Taraporewala are unanimous in their conclusion fixing 936 as the date of the advent of Parsi ancestors to Western India. We need not enter into this controversy about dates; it is however unlikely that the Iranian migration to Western India should have been later than 936. Khurshedji R. Cama,<sup>18</sup> the pioneer of the modern school of philological Avestan study, observes that his attention was drawn by Dr. Bhau Daji to the Pahlavi inscriptions to be found in the Buddhist Kāneri

caves near Bombay. When these inscriptions were deciphered, it was found that three small Parsi groups, constituted of relatives and friends, had at different times visited those caves and there recorded their own names and the years of their visit. The inscriptions had therefore become historical documents. It appears from those inscriptions that the earliest Parsi group had been there in the Yezdegardi year A. Y. 356 (A.D. 988), the other in A. Y. 368 (A.D. 1000) and the third in A. Y. 390 (A.D. 1022). The first of these dates makes it evident that these Parsi visitors to the caves were the immediate descendants of those Iranians who quitted their motherland to escape the Arab persecution and settled in Western India where they must have already begun to spread as far as Sopārā and the fishing village now known as Bombay. At any rate this shows that the great Iranian exodus could not have been later than 988.

But the hydra-headed subject of the migration to Sanjān still bristles with numerous controversial issues. The importance of Sanjān to day is negligible but in those days it may be supposed to be a flourishing port. It is 50 miles north of Thānā and 88 miles north of Bombay. It is not easy to establish its identity for it was known by different names — to the Portuguese as St. John and to the Arab geographers as Sindān. Some identify Sanjān with the "Hanjaman" referred to in the three grants of the Silahāra dynasty (to which Jādī Rāṇā belonged). Dr. J. J. Modi<sup>19</sup> argues that the Parsis must have named the town Sanjān and known it also as "Hanjaman" (Anjuman or assembly). It is commonly believed that the Parsi ancestors themselves named the place Sanjān after the city of the same name in Khorāsān. Travelling in Iran in 1956 from Yezd to Kermān, to the surprise of the present writer, his bus brought him to a place of little importance, known as

Rīfsanjān. It is needless to indulge in wild speculation on so slender a basis as the resemblance between names, but it naturally awakens a chain of thoughts in our mind. Could there be more places than one in Iran named Sanjān? Was there a place named Sanjān in Iran during the times when the Iranian Pilgrim Fathers left their motherland as there is at the present day? Was the place so important as to nestle in their minds when they landed in Western India? Was there so striking a similarity between the two Sanjāns as to justify the naming of the Indian city after its Iranian namesake? These questions by themselves demand patient investigation and research which would however be out of place in the present volume.

The ingenuity of historians is also sorely taxed in identifying the various kings of Sanjān with Jādi Rāṇā (otherwise known as Jai Rāṇā or Jayadeva Rāṇā), mentioned in the *Qisseh*. This work also refers to a wise leader of the Iranian exiles but is provokingly silent about his name, the determination of which is also attended by formidable difficulties. The Rāṇā laid down five conditions on the acceptance of which he was pleased to bestow on the refugees a large piece of land and the guarantee of toleration and protection which they so sorely needed. The five conditions, fortunately recorded in the *Qisseh*, were:— (1) the relinquishment of Pahlavi and the adoption of the regional language of Gujarat; (2) the abandonment of the Iranian female apparel for the dress worn by the Gujarati women; (3) the renunciation of arms for a life of peaceful industry; (4) performance of the nuptial ceremony in the evenings in preference to the morning; (5) explanation to be submitted of the main tenets of the Zarathushtrian religion. No restrictions were imposed about food, but the Parsis, in deference to Hindu sentiment, saw the wisdom of

abstaining from beef. To gratify the Hindus the Parsis incorporated into their marriage ceremony a Sanskrit rendering of the Pāzend benediction chanted on the occasion. On behalf of the Parsis an assurance was given to the Hindu king:— *Hamēh Hindustān rā yār bāshim* (we shall remain friends of the whole of India) — a sacred pledge which the Parsis have always zealously endeavoured to fulfil to the best of their capacity.

But who was the sagacious leader of the Parsi ancestors about whose name the "*Qisseh*" is silent? Tradition has assigned this honour to *Dastur* Nairyosangh, son of Dhawal, son of Shāhpur, son of Shehryār. It is from this Shāhpur, son of Shehryār, that Indian Parsi priests usually trace their descent. *Nairyosangh* is traditionally supposed to have conveyed the essence of the Zarathushtrian faith to Jādi Rāṇa in the form of sixteen Sanskrit verses, about which again there is no reference in the *Qisseh*. Later research has now settled that it was not *Dastur* Nairyosangh but a Brahmin named Ako Adhyāru who was responsible for the Sanskrit verses.<sup>20</sup> *Dastur* Nairyosangh is also said to have translated several Zarathushtrian scriptures into Sanskrit. But it is not possible that he could have mastered the Sanskrit language in such a short time as to enable him to perform the feat. And indeed the sixteen verses, traditionally attributed to Nairyosangh, are couched in such defective Sanskrit that its writer, whoever he was, could hardly have mustered the courage to embark on a Sanskrit version of the Zarathushtrian scriptures. The Parsi scholars in despair are now driven to the theory that there must have been two men named *Dastur* Nairyosangh Dhawal. The first person of that name led the Iranian band of fugitives and was their spokesman before Jādi Rāṇa and the consecrator of the first *Ātashbehrām* on Indian soil soon after the landing. His successor and namesake flourished

about the 12th century and translated several Zarathushtrian sacred works into Sanskrit. The *Qizch* is, however, blissfully ignorant about both.

There is a thoroughly familiar tradition that when the Parsi exiles landed at Sanjān, its king Jādi Rāpā was reluctant to admit those warlike fugitives with a martial bearing, about whose antecedents nothing was known, into his peaceful little kingdom. With a view to getting rid of them as politely as possible, he sent them a pot filled to the brim with milk, gently insinuating thereby that just as there was no room for further milk in the vessel, there was no accommodation for the refugees, who were *de trop* in his kingdom. The Parsis stood dumbfounded, unable to solve this puzzle, whose solution immediately dawned on the mind of their sagacious chief. The latter quietly sprinkled a handful of sugar<sup>21</sup> into the vessel, thereby suggesting that just as the sugar did not ruffle but rather sweetened the milk, so too would the Parsis identify their interests with those of their fellowcitizens, tending not to disturb or agitate but rather pacify and harmonize the conflicting interests of society. The king was pleased with the qualities of head and heart so ingeniously revealed in the reply, and granted the necessary facilities to the petitioners. We wish this story were true, but it is unsupported by history, though it remains a profoundly significant parable, representing the cordial relations of Parsis with the sister-communities of India. As usual, there is not a scrap of evidence even about this story in the *Qisseh i Sanjān*.

The *Qisseh* also records that 500 years after the advent of the Parsi fugitives, Sanjān was attacked by Alaf Khan, the general of Sultan Muhammad. The Parsis thereupon hastened to fulfil the promise their ancestors had made to Jādi Rāpā. A Parsi general named Artishir led his forces to battle and the invaders were repulsed; but they



returned, reinforced by additional troops, defeated the Hindu and Parsi army, and Ardshir was slain. Sanjān was conquered and the Parsis set out on their wanderings, seeking protection for themselves and the sacred fire, which after several stages was temporarily removed to Navsari under the guidance of the celebrated Dāvar Chāngā Āshā. This great Parsi leader was a *desai* or *zamindār*: though himself a *behdin* (layman), he found himself compelled to render timely and conspicuous services as a custodian of the sacred fire in the most distressing circumstances, when the menace from the enemy was both imminent and overwhelming. At this point the *Qisseh* breaks off rather abruptly.

But who is this Sultan Muhammad and when did he flourish? This is the last but not the least of the many baffling riddles we come across in the *Qisseh*. According to Sir James Campbell,<sup>22</sup> he was Sultan Muhammad 'Alāuddin Khilji, the conqueror of Chitor, whose brother Alaf Khan had captured Gujarat in 1297. This theory is now completely given up, and further researches into the subject have enabled scholars to conclude that the Muslim king could be no other than Sultan Mahmud Begdā of Gujarat (ruled 1459-1511), who, soon after his conquest of the fort of Chāmpāner (Pāvāgadh) in 1484, must have occupied Sanjān and scattered its Parsi defenders. Another proof may be advanced to show that the sack of Sanjān took place in the 15th century. According to the *Qisseh*, this incident happened 500 years after the advent of the Parsi ancestors to Western India. Now if we accept 936 as the date of this advent, then, according to the "*Qisseh*", Sanjān must have been captured in the 15th century. S. H. Hodiwala,<sup>23</sup> taking his stand on Muslim histories like the *Tabaqāt i Akbari*, *Tārikh i Ferishtā* and *Mirāt i Sikandari*, advances the theory that Mahmud Begdā conquered the petty kingdoms of South Gujarat in 1469, and this must

therefore be the probable date of the sack of Sanjān. A further proof in support of the same theory will be advanced in Chapter IV, where the "Rewāyets" and their importance will be discussed. The whole question is still not definitely settled, but it is clear that the sack of Sanjān and the removal of the sacred fire to Navsari can hardly be much later than the second half of the 15th century.

The historical inaccuracies of the "*Qisseh i Sanjān*" and its sins of commission and omission have so nettled certain writers like B. S. Nasikwala,<sup>24</sup> B. N. Bhathena<sup>25</sup> and Col. M. S. Irani<sup>26</sup> as to drive them to the extreme conclusion of the "*Qisseh*" being a totally fictitious poem. According to these critics, the Parsis had ever been in India from ancient times and had not to flee hither from the Arabs for the preservation of their faith. Thus, by knocking the bottom out of the whole story, they endeavour to make out that the "*Qisseh*" is nothing more than a thrilling romance, a mere cock-and-bull story, and not a work of history to be taken seriously. It seems that the "*Qisseh*", which is after all an important landmark in the history of the Parsis in India, has received harsher treatment from these critics than what it actually deserves. An attempt is here made consequently to adjust the balance and estimate the value of this work, despite its limitations.

Even admitting that Behman Kaiqobād, the author of the "*Qisseh i Sanjān*", had not a sound knowledge of history, it would be erroneous to say that his work was completely devoid of historical truth. It must be noted that the "*Qisseh*" does not record the history of the Parsi advent to India (for unhappily no such history is extant at the present day), but the current tradition associated with such history. It is unwise to ignore and ridicule traditions for their lack of authenticity. There is no smoke

without fire, and when a deeply rooted tradition is found to be current in a community for several centuries, and when it is corroborated by various sources, it becomes necessary on the part of historians to acknowledge its genuine character. Before condemning a tradition for want of authoritative historical knowledge, the origin and existence of the tradition must be accounted for, and reasons advanced for its rejection. Now Behman Kaiqobād observes candidly that he has only versified in Persian what had been "shown" to him by a wise *Dastur*. *Dastur* Dr. H. P. Mirza<sup>27</sup> argues that according to the "*Qisseh*" the wise *Dastur* had not merely communicated but actually "shown" something to Behman, and hence some historical document (since missing) must have been produced before Behman, who therefore might not have found himself compelled to introduce anything of his own invention in the poem. We have seen that no historical account is available of the Parsi exodus to India; it is therefore all the more necessary to make the most of the tradition preserved in the "*Qisseh*", and to extract from it any historical truth that may be available or possible. But for the "*Qisseh i Sanjān*" we would have been groping in complete darkness on this subject.

There are historical errors even in Firdausi's *Shāhnāmah*, and yet the Parsis have grappled it to their souls with hoops of steel, for it records in imperishable verse the glorious deeds of their Iranian ancestors. There may not be much of authentic history in the "*Qisseh*", which however records a current tradition based on history and an account of the circumstances in which the Iranian ancestors left their country and boldly encountered all troubles for the sake of their religion. It would be a mistake to say, for instance, that *Marmion* and *Rokeby* were not historical at all, only because their author, Sir Walter Scott, was,

knowingly or otherwise, not strictly faithful to history in the descriptions of the battles of Flodden Field and Marston Moor, mentioned in those poems. A historical poem, novel or drama may sometimes deliberately deviate to a certain extent from history when its author has an artistic purpose to serve or a definite doctrine to propound. Behman Kaiqobād was, however, neither a conscious artist nor a zealous propagandist, but an honest, if uncritical, transmitter of a historical tradition, which was prevalent in his times. It is possible to impeach certain historical details of the "*Qisseh*", but it would be a mistake to deny all historical basis to the poem, which has preserved for us a valuable current tradition. Again, the "*Qisseh*" is after all, as its name implies, an episode; it is not called *tawārikh* or history; nor is it wholly fictitious, for it is founded on a historical tradition, transmitted to posterity, about the exodus of the Iranians from their motherland. The "*Qisseh*" is also a poem, not precise history written in sober prose, and it is clear that poets are not so faithful to history as prose writers are supposed to be, but are often seen to indulge in hyperbolism and flights of imagination.

Those who believe that the "*Qisseh*" is fictitious observe that the Parsi ancestors could not have been so timid as to flee from Iran for dread of the Arabs. We regret we cannot see eye to eye with such critics on this point. Was it timidity or wisdom that prompted the Parsi ancestors to come away to India rather than continue in Iran, endure indignity and persecution from the Arabs and finally run the danger of being converted to a foreign creed? Does the flight display weakness or a spirit of adventure? Should the Puritan Pilgrim Fathers of England be branded with cowardice when, for the preservation of their faith from the intermeddling religious policy of James I, they left their homes and settled in distant America in 1620?

Were the Huguenots guilty of saint-heartedness when they left their hearths and homes, flying in despair from the terrible dragonnade of Louis XIV, as a result of that arbitrary monarch's Revocation in 1685 of the Edict of Nantes? Did the Jews betray pusillanimity when during the various anti-Semitic atrocities they fled for the preservation of their lives and their religion to the four corners of the earth? Even today we have among us vast numbers of unfortunate, homeless refugees who have escaped the persecution of their rulers in their own country and sought shelter and sympathy in India. Should we heap insult on injury by calling them lily-livered poltroons for thus fleeing from their land? Those who are devoid of sympathy and even of the requisite insight into the woes of others may best be advised to put themselves imaginatively in place of those, whose sufferings they are inclined to consider so light-heartedly.

Some are of opinion that the Muslim regime was not tyrannical nor was proselytism compulsory, and hence it was needless for the Parsis to leave Iran. Without entering here into this very long and vexed question, let us ask if it is ever possible for a large group of persons thus to banish themselves voluntarily without the shadow of a cause from their beloved home. If there had been no tyranny from the Muslims of those days, did the Parsi ancestors come over to India for commercial pursuits? If so, why did they settle down here and not return to the mother-land as other traders do? They could not have been so insane as to causelessly forsake their loved homes and associations to establish themselves permanently on an alien soil. Inquire of the numerous homeless fugitives, who are with us today, whether they had a potent cause for deserting their lands, homes and belongings; whether, in spite of that cause, they liked to quit their country, and whether they still cherished

the memory of the country they were thus forced to forsake. On reading or hearing of the woes of the present-day refugees, a modern Parsi is irresistibly put in mind of the exodus of his ancestors from Iran in the most tragic and disastrous circumstances. There was then no facility of transport as we have today; in these circumstances a group of Iranian men, women and children, old and young, bade adieu to the motherland, resigned themselves to the will of Neptune, prepared themselves to endure starvation, sufferings and the vagaries of the weather, and finally to link their destinies with those of India and her people. It is impossible to assume that the Parsi ancestors were such sworn foes to sense as to invite such terrible sufferings on themselves without any valid cause. This problem can thus be solved only by common-sense without the necessity of quoting historical authorities.

We have seen previously that during the long historical connection between Iran and India, the Iranians had often been to India, had colonized certain portions of it and even ruled in certain places. Even after the Arab conquest, as seen in certain historical instances cited in this chapter, there is every possibility of some Iranian groups having migrated to India by the land-route; but they have left no traces, and presumably they must have been decimated by foreign conquerors or absorbed in the vast Hindu population as the Mag Brahmins in previous centuries. It is from the "*Qisseh i Sanjān*" that we derive the valuable tradition of a large assemblage of Iranians leaving the motherland by the sea-route and settling in Western India; and the inference is irresistible that the Indian Parsis of the present day must be their descendants. Even admitting that the Parsis from early times had been scattered all over India, how can our critics account for the predominance of the Parsi population only on the Western coast of this country?

Why is it that the hearts of the Parsis are still attracted to the towns and villages of Western India? According to Col. M. S. Irani,<sup>28</sup> the Sasanian Iranians came to trade with India, but that after the Arab conquest commerce fell into the hands of the conquerors, and those Iranians, finding it impossible to return to the mother-country, stayed on in India, where they were joined by other fugitive bands of their co-religionists; and this, in the opinion of Col. Irani, accounts for the Parsi population in India.

These particulars may be true to a certain extent, but they do not explain the concentration of Parsi population in *Western India*. We have no continuous history of the Parsis after the exodus, but Parsi priests have preserved with legitimate pride reliable notes of their ancestry, and even there, particularly in the earlier stage of Parsi history, we read of cities located and incidents having taken place in Western India.<sup>29</sup> According to reliable Parsi records we find that the first Iranian emigrants arrived in Western India from Khorāsān. According to the "*Qisseh i Sanjān*", as previously observed, a large group of Iranians sought safety for themselves and their faith in the mountain fastnesses of Khorāsān. This fact is found to be corroborated by Parsi records, according to which the first Iranian emigrants were known as *Khorāsān Mandli* (Khorāsān group). Research in this direction has shown that in 1081 the Silahāra king Anantdeva made a grant to this *Khorāsān Mandli*, who were evidently the descendants of the Iranian fugitives who settled in Western India.<sup>30</sup>

But what fascination was there by way of charm of nature, or salubrity of climate or hopes of royal patronage or protection that drew the Parsi ancestors from all corners of the country to settle in Western India? There is not a tittle of evidence on all these points. We are not told whether the Parsis congregated in a band in Western India

or whether they came in batches. According to the critics of the "*Qisseh*", there were seven Towers of Silence in a town named Tena near Surat, which is now nearly forgotten; but this only confirms our argument that there must have been a fairly large population of Parsis in the Western corner of the country. Two out of these seven Towers of Silence are still extant to bear evidence to the Parsi population on that side some centuries ago. Even at Sanjān to-day relics are discovered of what seems to be a ruined Tower of Silence. If archaeological excavations are carried on on these sites, important light is likely to be shed regarding the dates when these Towers were constructed and the settlement of the Parsis in West India.<sup>31</sup>

Again, many Parsi surnames, like Surti, Bharucha, Randeria, Anklesaria, Bulsara, Udwadia, Sanjana, Khambata, Bilimoria etc. reveal the association of Parsis with cities of Western India. *It should be considered significant that, compared to these, the number of Parsi surnames, formed from towns in the North, East and South of India, is negligible. Critics have not been able to offer any satisfactory explanation about this stern and simple fact. Nor can critics explain why all the eight Ātashbehrāms (the cathedral fire-temples or highest type of fire-temples) have been built in Udwada, Navsari, Surat and Bombay — all in Western India.*

Even if all other arguments are weighed in the balance and found wanting, it will still be conceded that one of the most convincing and unanswerable of all proofs is the linguistic one. The very fact that Parsis have used and are still using the language of Gujarat — a province of Western India — as their mother-tongue, and the very fact of their literature being in that language before they took to English from the second half of the 19th century, would clearly go to support the tradition set forth in the "*Qisseh*"



of a large group of Iranians having migrated from Iran and settled in Gujarat on the Western coast of India.

There are two non-Zarathushtrian writers who flourished long before the "*Qisseh*" was composed and who yet corroborate certain important statements made in that poem. Dr. J. J. Modi<sup>22</sup> quotes Al Bilāzari (9th century) who refers to the defeated Parsis of Kermān having left Iran from Hormuz by the sea-route. The geographer Yāqoot (circa 1200) also alludes to the Arab conquest of Kermān and the flight of the Iranians by sea. The statements of these independent writers, who preceded the composition of the "*Qisseh*", go to confirm the main fact established by that poem that a group of Parsis had left Iran by sea to settle in India.

We are thankful to the "*Qisseh i Sanjān*" for having given us the very important fact of the Parsis coming from Iran not by land but by the sea-route. Had they arrived by land as the Mag Brahmins and other groups did, and had they escaped extermination by foreign conquerors of India or absorption in the ocean of Hinduism, there would have been a fairly large population of the Parsis in North India, and their surnames, their mother-tongue and their literature would have unmistakably proclaimed their association with numerous Northern cities. But the very existence of Parsis in large numbers even today in West India alone shows that their ancestors must have departed from Iran by the sea-route. Coming by the sea-route to India, the West coast alone is accessible, and it is possible to land at any of the ports from Sindh to Saurāshtra without the necessity of penetrating further south. The first place the Parsis were likely to have touched must have been the port of Tiz in Baluchistan, from where they must have proceeded to Debul<sup>23</sup> in Sindh. But since during the times of the exodus Sindh was in the hands of Muslim rulers, who

were representatives of the Khalif, the Parsis naturally were not inclined to fall from the frying-pan into the fire, and therefore they must have seen the wisdom of advancing further south.

Consulting a map of Mediaeval India, we realize that the Parsis must then have, intentionally or otherwise, passed by places like Bet Shankhodar, Porbandar and Somnāth (or whatever names they bore in those days), till destiny took them to the southernmost extremity of Saurāshtra—the port of Div where, according to the "*Qisseh*", they stayed for nineteen years. Being advised by their leader they shifted again, were caught in a storm and blown providentially to the shores of Sanjān (near Surat), at that time apparently a place of far greater importance than it is at present. Obtaining at Sanjān the royal protection they needed, the Parsi ancestors found it needless to go further south to Sopārā,<sup>34</sup> a religious and commercial centre only 48 miles distant. Hence it can be inferred that the Parsis did not pour into West India from various parts of the country but that, as mentioned in the "*Qisseh*", a large group of Iranians after the Arab conquest of their country set sail by the sea-route and settled in West India at a place which they found most suited to their requirements.

Assuming that the Parsi ancestors did not land at Sanjān, they might have landed somewhere in the neighbourhood; if they were not favoured by Jādi Rāpa, they might have sought protection from some other Hindu ruler; if their advent did not take place in 936 it may possibly have been earlier; perhaps the great group of Parsi exiles may have been preceded or followed by other batches. Even if we thus succeed in picking holes in the numerous details provided by the "*Qisseh i Sanjān*", and making due allowance for the absence of historical documents pertaining to those times, the inference that a large group of Parsis

came by sea from Iran and settled in Western India still becomes irresistible, and for that inference we are indebted to the "*Qisseh*", despite all its limitations. On the other hand those who hold that the "*Qisseh*" is fictitious and that the Parsis crowded in Gujarat from various parts of India have failed to produce even a scrap of evidence in support of their contention."

We shall now examine the final argument in connection with this question. We have referred at length to those Iranians who came in groups in times long past and were assimilated in the Hindu fold, the most remarkable instance being that of the Mag Brahmins. How is it then that the large assemblage of Parsi Pilgrim Fathers managed to escape that doom but remained intact as an independent Zarathushtrian community like the Indian Jews? Three reasons, the principles involved in which are still applicable to the Parsis, may be set forth by way of explanation. The first cause is the staunch faithfulness of the Parsis to their faith, for without such tenacity they would have been absorbed long ago in the teeming millions of India. Since the Parsis had relinquished Iran for the preservation of their faith, it can safely be assumed that their devotion to their religion must have been intense. As a consequence their descendants were able to maintain their separate communal entity, friendly to but unabsorbed by the major communities.

The second reason is the strong aversion of the Parsis to intercommunal marriages. Had the Parsis gone in for such unions, the knell of their existence would have sounded centuries ago, and they would have been wiped out as a community like their predecessors—the Mag Brahmins. The Parsi ancestors who came from Iran were accompanied by their women and children; and on this point the "*Qisseh i Sanjān*" is quite unambiguous :

*"Zan o farzand dar kishli nishāndand,  
Ba sui Hind kishli tund rāndand":*

(They seated their women and children in boats which were speedily steered in the direction of India.)

Such being the case the Parsis were not mostly compelled to marry women of other communities. It is possible there might have been cases of illicit union and concubinage with non-Zarathushtrian women, but no Parsi could have dared to vitiate the religious atmosphere of the joint-family of those times by marrying a woman who was not of his own faith. To-day the Parsis are said to hold "progressive" views, and yet they generally share the same religious tenacity and disapproval of intercommunal marriages that characterized their forefathers.

The third cause of the consolidation and survival of the Parsi community in India is their firm refusal to convert non-Parsis to their own faith. It is purely a measure of self-defence, calculated to save the community from a promiscuous admixture of foreign blood, and not based on any fancied notion of racial superiority. It is true that proselytism is permitted in the Zarathushtrian scriptures, and verses can be cited in support of this statement. Yet the Parsi ancestors rightly felt that if in their peculiar circumstances proselytism were given free scope, they would soon dwindle into a community of half-castes, the characteristic Zarathushtrian virtues would disappear, and the standard of communal purity would be considerably lowered. It is however true that non-Parsis have been and are still admitted surreptitiously into the Zarathushtrian fold, but the Parsis have time and again pronounced their disapproval of the act, and the *Dastur* who dares to oppose the will of the community brings a hornets' nest about his ears and is subjected to severe reprehension.

It is impossible for the Parsis to forget the deep debt of gratitude they owe to the Hindus who offered them protection in their sore hour of need. Of all nations in the world the Hindus, in a sense, were least expected to protect the Parsis, for, after the deplorable split among the Indo-Iranian people, referred to in Chapter I, the Parsis still remain the worshippers of Ahura (God), though the Hindus interpret the word as Asura or infernal spirit. Again, the Parsis, almost mechanically and by sheer force of habit, begin the day even at present by imprecating the *Devras*, who are worshipped by the Hindus as the Shining Ones or gods! But such is the innate spirit of toleration among the Hindus that they chose to ignore the letter and adhere to the spirit, with the result that the Parsis were permitted to build their temples and worship God in their own way, using their own terminology, even though it sounded repulsive to the people whose protection they were anxious to seek.

Hence the Light of Iran, dwindling during and after the Arab conquest, was re-lit in India, where a miniature Iran arose and flourished in the Parsi settlement on the Western coast. The "*Qisseh i Sanjān*" is the last link in the long and interesting historical chain binding Iran and India. Rarely in the history of the world can two countries be found, territorially apart and yet so akin in race and culture as they are in their ancient religions and languages. The Parsis are the bridge between Iran and India, a hopeless minority with a glorious past, destined to play a part, suited to their worth in both countries, and by their very presence reminding both of their essential oneness that has prevailed through the ages.

It is no longer possible for the Parsis to claim Iran now as their *mādarwatan* (mother-land). Such an assertion, based more on sentiment than on the stern logic of facts,

might needlessly create a suspicion about their unquestioned loyalty to the land of their birth. Besides, it would be as improper for them to claim Iran today as their mother-land as it would be for the members of the present reigning House of Windsor to call themselves Germans on the ground that their ancestor George I had been invited in 1714 from Germany to rule over the British Isles. Today Iran can only be considered the *ancient* mother-land of the Parsis, that has bequeathed to them an inestimable and unforgettable legacy, the very name of Iran being sufficient to rejuvenate the oldest Zarathushtrian heart. Transplanted for centuries in a new soil and living under novel conditions, the Parsis have considered India, which has affectionately taken them to her bosom, as their Mother. They are happy in her happiness, distressed in her woes, and proud in the illustrious achievements of her sons. They remember with gratitude the timely hospitality they received, and as a well-consolidated community they are generally found to inhabit the Western shores of this country, dedicating their spirit of enterprise, service and benevolence at the feet of Mother India.

## NOTES

1. Sayyad Sulaiman Nadvi observes in his Urdu work '*Arab o Hind k̄ ta'alluqāt* (contacts between Arabia and India) that in the opinion of several historians the wife of Imām Husain and the ancestress of the Sayyads was an Indian lady.

Though the marriage of Imām Husain and the Princess Shehrbānu is widely accepted as a fact by Indian Muslims, so eminent a historian as Maulānā Shibli No'māni thoroughly

refutes the tradition in his Urdu work *Al Fārooq* (Life of Khalif 'Umar I). With facts and figures he demonstrates the untenability of the theory relating to this union, and observes that the story has been referred to only by Zamakhshari, a very mediocre historian, and quoted uncritically by Ibn Khaliqān. According to Shibli, the story of the marriage is conspicuous by its absence in such famous historians as Tabari, Ibn al Athir, Ya'qoobi, Balāzari and Ibn Qutaiba.

2. *Ancient Iranian Literature* by Dastur Dr. M. N. Dhalla

3. *Ibid.* Also cf. *The Teachings of the Magi* by R. C. Zaehner

4. *Gaudvaho* by Vākpati: translated with Introduction by S. P. Pandit

5. *Ancient Geography* by Cunningham: quoted by S. K. Hodiwala in his *Pāk Irānshāh ni Tawārikh* (Gujarati)

6. Quoted by Palanji B. Desai in his *Tārikh i Shāhān i Irān*: Vol. II: (Gujarati)

7. *India* by Albiruni: translated by Edward Sachau

8. *Vide History of India as told by its own Historians* by H. M. Elliot and J. Dowson: Vol. V Appendix.

9. The introduction of the pre-historic Afrāsiyāb, the contemporary of Rustam, in the 11th century A.D. bespeaks dense ignorance of these historians with regard to ancient Iranian history.

10. *Vide History of India as told by its own Historians* by H. M. Elliot and J. Dowson: Vol. III

11. *Tārikh i Shāhān i Iran* Vol. II by Palanji B. Desai (Gujarati)

12. *Ibid.*

13. *Bombay Gazetteer* by Sir James Campbell

14. *Vide History of India as told by its own Historians* by H. M. Elliot and J. Dowson: Vol. V: Appendix.

15. *Ibid.*

settled in India to the South of Bombay at last received, as did the Parsi Pilgrim Fathers, the shelter, security and religious toleration of which they were most in need. (*Vide Ancient Indian History and Culture: 3000 B.C. to A.D. 1000 by S. R. Sharma.*)



## CHAPTER FOUR

# POST-ISLAMIC CONTACTS BETWEEN IRAN AND INDIA

## I

### *The Dawn of the Renaissance*

AFTER the Arab conquest Iran changed masters but the communication with India continued as uninterrupted as before. In fact, as may be judged from the length of the present chapter, the Indo-Iranian contacts in post-Islamic times gained in frequency and intensity as compared to what they were previously. Iran was now rapidly changing outwardly and inwardly, but its central situation made it the receptacle of the cultural influences of various adjoining countries. Iran has often played the part of a transmitting agency through which the best thoughts of antiquity in literature, art, philosophy and religion have percolated into the mediaeval and thence into the modern world. India and Iran are neighbours, destined, as seen previously, to influence each other in numerous directions. The chain of continuity of contacts between the two countries, shaken but not snapped by the Arab conquest, may now be resumed.

The famous traveller and scholar Albiruni observes from his personal knowledge about the Hindus that they eschewed the society of foreigners, were reluctant to teach them their philosophy and religion, and usually kept their culture to themselves. They were found to be so narrow-minded as to deprive their own suppressed co-religionists, the Shudras, of the benefits of religious lore to which they

of those islands by the Hindus, who were however not fired by imperialistic ambitions but inspired by commercial and cultural motives and actuated by a spirit of enterprise. Sanskrit was found to be cultivated in those islands: Hindu names and those of Vedic deities could be traced in their society and religion: their customs, usages and institutions bear traces of Hindu influence, and their art is hardly inferior to that which prevailed in India. There were even instances of petty Hindu kingdoms in those places, being perhaps the result of efficient organization and superior military skill. These islands can therefore be justifiably called Greater India. But the Hindu influence at last declined with the advent of the Muslims in the 14th century.

This Hindu colonization is only an exceptional case, though a noteworthy one in the long history of India, for Hindus have never cherished any imperialistic ambitions nor conquered any territory beyond the confines of their own country in historical times. Owing to their spirit of exclusiveness the number of non-Buddhistic Hindu travellers and explorers is after all negligible as compared to the endless stream that poured from Islamic countries, of which we shall have to estimate only Iran and the travellers and scholars it dispatched to India. It must be remembered that Albiruni's remarks, stated previously, do not apply to the Buddhist travellers, whose movements were unrestricted by the caste-system, and who, as true missionaries, kept the flag of India flying and carried the message of their faith far and wide, as observed in Chapter II. India verily owes a debt of gratitude to the Buddhist missionaries who disseminated Indian culture far beyond her frontiers by their peaceful endeavours. As Dr. R. C. Majumdar<sup>5</sup> observes: "India may feel proud of the fact that she played the same role in civilizing large parts of Asia, at least in

the North East, South East and South, as Greece did in the case of Europe and Western Asia."

The pre-Islamic Arabs were great navigators and traders and had settled in Kalyān, Sopārā, Chaul and more particularly in Malabār, which they named "al filfil" or (the land of) pepper. But it is noteworthy that this connection with India was commercial rather than cultural, for culture among the Arabs prior to the promulgation of Islam was unimaginable. The spread of Islam synchronized with the building up of the vast Muslim empire, and Iran was among the first of the great nations to collapse. The Arabs became masters of the country and heirs to her celebrated cultural heritage. The Iranians, now converted into Islam, continued to take interest in India, and from various sources, more particularly from the great work of Sayyad Sulaimān Nadvi,<sup>6</sup> a long list could be made out of the Iranian Muslim travellers and geographers who wrote about India and her people, their religion and customs, their character and culture. The first Iranian Muslim to refer to India was Ibn Khurdāzbeh (9th century), an officer in the Postal Service of the 'Abbāside Khalifs. The next was Sulaimān Tājar (9th century), who hailed from 'Irāq and wrote about India in his *Safarnāmeḥ* (book of travels). He dwells eulogistically on the tolerance of a Vallabhi king of Gujarat towards the Muslims. The third Iranian Abu Zaid Hasan Sirāfi (9th century) belonged to Sirāf, the well-known port on the Persian Gulf: he was the first to throw light on the Indian settlement at Java. Ya'qubi (9th century), an officer during the 'Abbāside Caliphate, praises the Hindus for their intelligence as revealed, for instance, in the *Siddhānta* of Brahmagupta. Al Jāhiz of Basra (9th century) lavished unstinted eulogy on the Hindus for their skill in literature, arts, science and their high moral attainments.

In the 10th century Al Idrisi observes that the Hindus are by nature inclined to justice and that they are known for their integrity and good faith. Buzurg bin Shahryār (10th century), who from his very name reveals his Iranian origin, was a navigator: in his *ʿAjāib al Hind* (marvels of India) he dwells on the Hindu tolerance towards Islam and refers to Sopārā, then a flourishing port of Western India near Bombay. The renowned Iranian historian, geographer and traveller Abu al Hasan ʿAli Masʿudi of Bhaghdād (10th century) was author of *Muruj az Zahab* (prairies of gold): he had personally been to India and had important information to convey about a king of Gujarat and his sense of justice and fair play towards the Muslims.

Abu Ishāq Ibrāhīm bin Muhammad Istakhri (latter half of 10th century) was an Iranian of Istakhr, the ancient capital of Darius Hystaspes, known to the Greeks as Persepolis, the city of the Parsis. In his work *Kitāb al aqālīm* (book of countries) he dwells particularly on Gujarat, its people, its mosques and the cordial relations that existed between the Hindus and the Muslims. His contemporary, Ibn Hauqal, the merchant of Baghdād, also refers to the Muslims of Gujarat, especially of Cambay, and the happy course of their life under the tolerant Hindu regime. Another writer on India Abu Dalaf Masʿar bin Muhalhal Yambui (c 1000) was also a Baghdādi and was one of the first to come to India by the land route. The pre-eminence of the illustrious Albiruni (early 11th century) entitles him to special detailed notice which will be found in subsequent pages. Muhammad ʿAufi, author of *Lubāb al albāb* (essence of essences) was a descendant of ʿAbdur Rehmān bin ʿAuf, a companion of the Prophet Muhammad, and hailed from Bukhārā. In his *Jāwamiʿ ul hikāyāt* (collection of anecdotes) he refers to the prompt justice of a king of Gujarat who once punished several Hindus and Parsis of Cambay for

an act of high-handed tyranny to the Muslims. This unanimous chorus of appreciative authors is an eloquent testimony to the high character of the Hindus, their tolerance and their undoubted skill in literature and the fine arts.

All these authors were Iranian Muslims who usually wrote in Arabic, the medium employed by the intelligentsia of the times. It is very surprising to find, however, that these writers are treated even in the most reliable works as Arabs, despite their Iranian nationality. As a matter of fact not one of them came from Arabia or had any connections with that country. They were Muslim sons of the soil of Iran, using Arabic as their language according to the prevailing fashion. To label all such persons, lock, stock and barrel, as Arabs would not only be unfair to the Iranians but would seem as fantastic as to reckon all Indians, writing today in English, as Englishmen. One reason for this discrepancy has been assigned by 'Ali Akbar Shahābi,<sup>8</sup> who observes that when after the Arab conquest the ban against the use of the mother-tongue was relaxed and Iran came into its own, it was poetry that first began to be written in Persian. Prose appeared rarely in Persian, and for centuries, till the regime of the Mongols and Timurids from the 13th to 15th centuries, prose in Iran continued largely to be written in Arabic in accordance with the prevailing tendency. It was therefore but natural to mistake these Persian writers of Arabic prose for persons of Arabic birth, even when they had no connection with Arabia, except in their acceptance of its religion.<sup>9</sup>

The Muslim conquest of Sindh in 712 was a calamity from the Indian point of view, as foreign aggression even by angels can never be welcomed by sincere patriots. The invasion was not also fruitful in any permanent political results. It was a passing show, but its effects on Muslim

culture and even on the evolution of world-civilization were profound and far-reaching. We have referred to the peaceful advent of pre-Islamic Arabs in Malabar for purely commercial purposes; but with their acceptance of Islam a new phase opened in history when the Muslims emerged as conquerors, as they did at Sindh. The Muslims now came into intimate contact with the Indian people, their learning, culture and men of letters. Their eyes were now fully opened to the importance of a country which abounded in treasures, both material and intellectual, and the conquerors were not slow in exploiting both for their own benefit. Fortunately in the middle of the same century the 'Abbāsides rose to power in Iran: in 761 Baghdad was founded, and the "golden prime of good Hārūn ar rashid" extended from 786 to 808. Then began an intellectual association between Iran and India, which in the consuming passion for learning, ardent fervour of independent authorship as well as translation of foreign classics, and the abundant harvest of its intellectual output has few parallels in the history of culture.

The *fontes et origo* of the cultural contacts between Muslim Iran and India may be traced to the illustrious Barmaki (Barmecide) family, which practically presided over the intellectual destinies of Iran as ministers for 50 years from the times of Saffāh, the first 'Abbāsīde Khalīf to the reign of Hārūn ar rashid. It was owing to their genuine love of learning and lavish patronage of scholars that the tide of philosophy and science flowed from India into Iran. Following Prof. E. G. Browne, whose opinions on matters Iranian are usually considered the last word on the subject, it was once believed that the Barmecides were Zarathushtrian worshippers of the Fire-temple of Navbahār in Balkh. Sayyad Sulaimān Nadvī<sup>10</sup> has however conclusively shown from various sources that the Barmecides were Buddhists,

and that Navbahār was a Persianized term for Navvihār, *rihār* meaning a Buddhist monastery.

In 761 the second 'Abbāsīde Khalīf, Abu Ja'far Mansur, founded Baghdād, far famed in history and fiction. This capital of the 'Abbāsīdes in material and intellectual splendour was soon to eclipse the glories of Damascus, Kufa and Basra. Baghdād soon developed into another Alexandria, a centre of international culture, where scholars of different faiths and countries gravitated for exchange of ideas and accumulation of knowledge. The foundation of Baghdād synchronized with the age of the renaissance of learning which now dawned on Iran in all its splendour, and the 'Abbāsīde regime of revival and reform has been considered the golden age of Iranian enlightenment. It was an age when bigotry gave place to tolerance and a sympathetic interchange of ideas. In fact true culture can never exist unless the various religions and their philosophies are studied broadmindedly with a view to understanding different points of view, bearing on a certain question. Akbar's "*Ibādathkhāneh*" (house of worship) at Fatehpur Sikri was once confined to Muslim divines only, but was soon opened to theologians of various faiths for discussion on religious matters. It is gratifying to find that the 'Abbāsīde Khalīfs of the 8th and 9th centuries were so liberal in their views as to hold similar religious debates in which non-Muslims were free even to criticize the philosophy of Islam.

It is a matter of universal experience that the renaissance of learning in every country is characterized in its incipient stages by a consuming passion for study and translation of the best foreign classics either into the mother-tongue or the prevailing medium of literary expression. It is natural therefore to find that the cultural treasures of India, opened up by the Arab conquest of Sind in 712, now sharpened the

intellectual appetites of the Iranians. The 'Abbāside Khalīfs, inspired by their Barmecide ministers, especially Yāhyā bin Khālīd Barmakī, the Maecenas of his times, invited a group of Indian *pandits* and *vaidyas* (physicians) to Baghdād, where books on the various branches of Indian culture began to be translated into Arabic. The names of these Indian scholars are so transformed in Arabic that it becomes extremely difficult, if not impossible, to trace the originals through the corrupted forms. Some of these Indian scholars, as known by their Arabic names, were—Bahlā, Mankā, Bāzigar and Fīlbarfīl. One other name, referred to by Muḥammad bin Ishāq an Nadīm (10th century) in his invaluable *Kitāb al Fihrist* (book of index) is Ibn Dahan, which name, says Sayyad Sulaiman Nadvī,<sup>11</sup> may be a corruption of Dhanvantri (the name of the Hindu god of medicine). This Ibn Dahan was appointed Director of the Hospital of the Barmecides. Once when Khalīf Hārūn ar rashīd's ailment baffled the skill of Iranian physicians, an Indian named Mankā was invited to Baghdād. His endeavours were soon crowned with success and were richly rewarded by the grateful monarch. This Mankā, whose real Indian name, as suggested by Sayyad S. Nadvī,<sup>12</sup> may perhaps be Maneck, was deputed in charge of the "*Dār ul tarjumah*" (translation bureau) for rendering Sanskrit works into Arabic. Another Indian physician who is said to have rendered similar service to Hārūn ar rashīd in his illness was Sāleh bin Bahlā.

The minister Yāhyā bin Khālīd Barmakī is said to have despatched an expert to India to make botanical investigations and bring with him to Iran several medicinal herbs and roots. Khalīf Muwaffaq Billāh 'Abbāsi (9th century), followed by other monarchs, is reported to have sent physicians to India for study and research in medicine. Among the medical books rendered into Arabic we have



the work of the great Indian physician Charak (originally Agnivesha but called Shirak in Arabic) who flourished at the court of the Kushāṇ king Kanishka (A.D. 78-102) on the outskirts of India. Charak's work was first translated into Persian from which it was rendered into Arabic by 'Abdullāh bin 'Ali. The work of another Indian physician, Shushrut<sup>12</sup> (called Susru in Arabic) was translated by Pandit Mankā by order of Yāhyā bin Khālid Barmaki. The *Ashṭāṅg-hridaya* of another great physician, Vāgbhatta (c. 7th century A.D.) was also translated into Arabic. A work on Indian medicine, known as *Sindistāq*, referred to by Ibn Nadim in his *Fihrist*, was translated by Ibn Dahan, who was also responsible for the rendering into Arabic of another Indian work on medicine named *Istāngar*. It is interesting to find a work on the diseases of women by an Indian woman-physician named Rusā, translated into Arabic. The Hindus are well-known for their kindness to animals: we are not surprised to find therefore a work on veterinary science by Pandit Chānak rendered into Arabic at Baghdād under the name of *Kitāb al baitarat* (book on veterinary science).<sup>14</sup> The translation of various minor Indian medical works need not detain us any longer.

The ancient Hindus had also acquired fame by their excellence in mathematics and astronomy. It is noteworthy that Indian numerals were introduced into Arabic in which language they are still known as "*Ar ruqum al Hindiyyeh*" (Indian notations).<sup>15</sup> Upto the 8th century A.D. letters only were used in place of numerals in Arabic, when this Indian system passed to the Arabians, probably along with the astronomical tables brought to Baghdād by an Indian ambassador in 773. This system was explained in Arabic in the early part of the 9th century by the renowned scholar Muhammad bin Musā al Khwārizmī, and from that time it continued gradually to be used throughout the

Arabian world. Albiruni also corroborates this indebtedness to India by acknowledging that the Muslim system of numerals is derived from the Hindus. It is well known that this system passed from the Arabians to Europe, where these numbers are known as "Arabic numerals" even at the present day. It is thus quite significant that the Indian numerical system, when introduced into Arabic, was known as "Hindi", and yet when the numerals passed over to Europe through the Iranian scholars, who wrote in Arabic, the same came to be known and are still known as "Arabic numerals." A great impetus was given to mathematical and astronomical studies in Iran by contact with India. The world owes the knowledge of decimal notations to India from where it passed into Europe through the Iranian mathematicians writing in Arabic. Likewise it was the Hindus that gave algebra to the Western world through the Iranian scholars of the 8th century, the very word for that science being Arabic—*ʿIlm al jabr wa al muqābaleh* (science of uniting and equalizing), contracted into the English word—algebra. In the words of Macdonell,<sup>16</sup> "During the 8th and 9th centuries the Indians became the teachers in arithmetic and algebra of the Arabs, and through them of the nations of the West. Thus, though we call the latter science by an Arabic name, it is a gift we owe to India."

In 770, as observed by Sayyad S. Nadvi,<sup>17</sup> a deputation of scholars from India arrived in Baghdād, bringing with them the astronomical work of Brahmagupta (born 598 A.D.), known as *Siddhānta* or *Brahmasiddhānta*. It was translated into Arabic and the work was known in the Arabised form as *Sindhind*. A work by Āryabhatta (born 476 A.D.) was also rendered into Arabic and was known as *Arjband*. Another work of Brahmagupta, named *Khanda-khādyā*, was conveyed into Persia through its Arabic translation and was known as *Arkand*. From astronomy the

transition is easy to its sister-science astrology. When Baghdād was founded in 761 by Khalif Mansur, almanacs were needed, for Iranians, like Indians, were fond of determining auspicious days and moments for the commencement of their works. Iranian astrologers were consulted, but the services of Hindu men of science were also requisitioned. In the days of Khalif Mansur himself several Hindu astrological works were translated. Among the Hindu astronomers the name that has fascinated the Iranians is that of Pandit Kanka. An Indian work on palmistry was also translated into Arabic.

But it was the *Siddhānta* of Brahmagupta, mentioned above, that cast the most powerful spell on Iranian scholars, the two most celebrated being Muhammad Ibn Ibrāhīm Fazāri and Ya'qub bin Tāriq. This stream of Indian knowledge, percolating in the gardens of Iran, produced an abundant harvest and gave a tremendous impetus to the study of mathematics and astronomy. It was then that the *Mathematike Syntaxis* (system of mathematics) of the famous Alexandrian astronomer Ptolemaeus of the second century A.D. was translated into Arabic and known as *Almagest* (the great work). An observatory was now built for the study of astronomical phenomena in the reign of Khalif Māmūn (9th century), renowned for his tolerance and his patronage of learning and men of letters. It was Māmūn who emulated the "Jund ī Shāhpur", the academy of the Zarathushtrian King Naushirwān (6th century A.D.), with the inauguration of the *Bayt al hikmat* (home of philosophy) at Baghdād. In his reign flourished the famous mathematician Alkhwārazmī of Khiwā, from whose name is derived the English word "algorism" or Arabic decimal notation. He was the author of *As Sindhind 'ar saghir* (minor Sindhind or minor Siddhānta to distinguish it from the major *Siddhānta* of Brahmagupta). The march of

knowledge knows no frontiers but can scale the mountains and cross the seas in its triumphant stride. The influence of this *Siddhānta* penetrated into Spain where great mathematical works were inspired in the 11th century. The torch that was thus lighted was able to relume the darkness of benighted Europe during the Mediaeval ages. Hindus have created renowned thinkers and scholars, not famous travellers and sailors; hence for the dissemination of learning India had to depend on the services of her neighbour Iran, who proved to be an excellent intermediary between India and the Western world from the 8th century onwards.

The ancients, both Western and Indian, were fond of conveying morals in the easily assimilable form of fables and parables. The great store-house of such fables is the Indian *Panchtantra*, in which highly didactic work animals are made to talk wisdom in the language of men. We have already observed in Chapter II how a work based on the *Panchtantra*, viz., *Kalileh wa Damaneh*, attributed to Pilpāi or Bidpāi and written presumably for king Dabishlim, migrated from India to Iran where it was rendered into Pahlavi by order of Naushirwān. It was subsequently translated into various languages and became the ancestor of a prolific progeny of interesting stories all over the world. The famous but anonymous *Arabian Nights*, which still enraptures young minds and transports them into the dreamland of romance, is not Arabian at all as its name signifies but wholly Iranian in origin and based on the Pahlavi work *Haẓār Afsāneh* (thousand tales). But in the *Arabian Nights* there are several stories which are definitely of Indian origin, for instance, the adventures of Sindbād, first rendered into Persian and then into Arabic.

Besides the *Kalileh wa Damaneh* there is another highly ethical Indian work, known as *Burzāsaf wa Baluḥar*. *Burzā* stands for Buddha, and the full word *Burzāsaf*, in the

opinion of Sayyad S. Nadvi<sup>18</sup> means *Bodhisatva*, or a being who is in the process of obtaining but has not yet obtained Buddhahood or enlightenment. This work is a very interesting and readable account of the life and renunciation of Gautama Buddha. It was translated into Arabic, through which, having caught the fancy of the world, it was rendered into various other languages.

Politics is ethics applied to the State and it is in this lofty sense that the word is interpreted in Hindu philosophy. But unfortunately so manifold and tortuous are the ways of the world that politics soon degenerated into under-hand dealings in practical life. The *Arthashastra* (science of economics) of Chāṇakya, the minister of Chandragupta Maurya (4th century B.C.) is a work on economics and politics, but it by no means presents Hindu ethics at its highest and best. This work of Chāṇakya (known as Shānāq in Arabic) was conveyed to Iran where it was translated in the Arab tongue.

Among Indian works of minor importance, translated into Arabic, we have some on poisons and snake-bites and their cure. An Indian work<sup>19</sup> on poisons was translated into Persian by Abu Hātim al Balkhi for Khālid al Barmaki in 815 and subsequently rendered into Arabic by Al 'Abbās bin Sa'id al Jawhari ten years later. An abbreviated *Mahābhārata* was translated into Arabic by Abu Sāleh bin Sha'ib and later by Abu al Hasan 'Ali Jabali in the tenth century. Various other works e.g. on agriculture, music, Hindu theogony, palmistry, interpretation of dreams, physiognomy etc. were translated from Sanskrit into Arabic particularly during the Caliphate of Hārūn and Māmūn (8th and 9th centuries).<sup>20</sup>

Three centuries after the subjugation of Sindh by the Arabs in 712, the Muslim onslaughts on India began afresh, the craving for conquest increasing with what it fed

on. The Rajputs of India at that time were disintegrated by petty jealousies and clannish animosities, which prevented them, in spite of their intrepidity and chivalry, from presenting a united front to their persistent enemy, who had apparently seen through the vulnerability of the Hindu position. The Muslims were led by Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni, the ablest military captain of the times, whose passion for conquest was stimulated by the zeal for iconoclasm, and who was least expected to swerve from his purpose when once he had determined to pursue a certain line of action. Under the circumstances the Muslim conquest of India was a foregone conclusion, and as Dr. D. C. Ganguly observes:<sup>21</sup> "It was no longer a question of whether, but when, that mighty flood (of Islam) would overwhelm the country as a whole." We are however not concerned with the havoc wrought by Sultan Mahmud in his numerous expeditions on India, but with his undisputed patronage of learning and men of letters, one of whom, the illustrious Albiruni, is as much known in India as in Iran, the land of his birth.

We have so far discussed numerous scholars who served to establish cultural contact between Iran and India, but the crown and culmination of Indo-Iranian contact could be evidenced in the work of the versatile scholar, historian, mathematician, physician and philosopher of Khwārazm (Khiva) Abu Raihān Albiruni 973-1048, who may appropriately be considered the unaccredited intellectual ambassador from Iran to India. Like his eminent contemporary Bu 'Alī Sinā (Avicenna), Albiruni with great difficulty managed to effect his escape from the unwelcome attentions of his stern and capricious master Sultan Mahmud, and being a student of comparative cultures, he was attracted to India, which became his home for a period long enough to enable him to make a thorough study of the

country and its people. Albiruni was so called because he belonged to the *biru* (outskirts) of the city of Khiva. This prodigy is said to have written 114 works on a variety of subjects, of which only 27 have survived. In his famous work on India he interprets the soul of India to Iran: it is so thorough and well-informed that, in the effective Urdu language of Sayyad S. Nadvi<sup>22</sup>, it made the accounts of India by Greek ambassadors and Chinese travellers appear as useless as antiquated almanacs. Albiruni was sympathetic in outlook and yet remarkably outspoken in his pronouncements, but it must be remembered that his unfavourable judgments are largely due to the fact that he has preserved for us a picture of India in its religious, social and political degeneracy and decline.

When Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni conquered Khiva he swept away into captivity at his capital some of the prominent men, and among them was Albiruni, and it was at Ghazni that he first came into contact with Indian traders and pandits. The Sultan was doubtless a patron of learning, but the tolerant and broad-minded scholar felt that he was a fish out of water in the court of this fanatic monarch. Soon after Mahmud's return from his devastating expedition on India in 1024, Albiruni set out for India, and it is passing strange that this Muslim scholar, belonging to the court of this iconoclastic Sultan, should have studied Sanskrit and the mysteries of Hinduism at the feet of pandits, inspired wholly by an unbiased love of learning and truth. Thus when Sultan Mahmud was out on his campaign of rapine and plunder, tempestuously bursting through India with fire and sword, his unassuming Iranian contemporary, smitten with a passion for learning and the comparative study of religions, silently soothed and cemented all lacerated hearts into a unity, and proved, as Aristotle had done in contrast to his contemporary Alexander, that .

the achievements of the pen were mightier and far more durable than those of the sword.

Some of Albiruni's works are: *Tārīkh al Hind* (history of India) in which, besides useful information on India and her people, he sheds valuable light on certain important cities like Lahore, Multan, Somnath, Kanouj, Cambay, Broach etc. His *Āthār al bāqīyah* (vestiges of the past or chronology of ancient nations) is a work indispensable for the study of Iranian civilization. He gave a revised translation of the work of the great Egyptian astronomer of the second century A.D. Ptolemaeus, which work was known in Arabic as *Almagest*. While in India, he studied and obtained a mastery over Sanskrit as seen in his revised version of the *Brahmasiddhānta* of Brahmagupta. He wrote a work examining and rectifying the mistakes committed in a previous Arabic version of the mathematical work of Āryabhatta. He translated a work on the Sāṅkhya philosophy of the Hindus, a work of the Indian sage Patanjali, the grammarian and author of *Yoga Sūtras* of the 2nd century B.C., and the *Laghujātakam* of the Indian astronomer Varāhamihir of the sixth century A.D.

According to the Rev. Father V. Courtois,<sup>23</sup> Sultan Mahmud on his return from India engraved on his coins a Sanskrit as well as an Arabic legend. The Arabic legend was the Islamic "Kalima" expression of faith — *Lā Ilāhā il Allāh Muḥammad ar rasul Allāh* (there is no deity but God and Muhammad is His apostle). Its Sanskrit rendering ran: *Ayaktam ekam, Muḥammadah avatārah* (the unmanifested is the One and Muhammad is His incarnation). It must be admitted that Muhammad's designation as God's *avatāra* (incarnation) would be repugnant to Islamic orthodoxy, and yet the legend appeared on coins current in a Muslim country and that too in the reign of a most bigoted Sultan, for the good reason that in the Sanskrit lexicon



there is no word to convey the exact significance of "prophet", and *anāsira* is the closest possible approximation to the term. There is a strong possibility pointing to Albiruni as the author of this Sanskrit legend. Albiruni is entitled to our respect not only as historian, mathematician and philosopher but as one who brought Iran and India closer by his sympathetic insight into the culture of both countries, and as the most perfect pattern we possess in mediæval times of Indo-Iranian unity.

The sword and the pen may be hostile in their functions, but, like step-sisters, ill-disposed to each other, they often move in company. The Muslim conquerors of India began to take a gradual but steady interest in Sanskrit and Hindi, and under their patronage some of the important works in those Indian languages were translated into Persian. When in the middle of the 14th century Firuzshāh Taghlaq captured Nagarkote, he obtained possession of a valuable Sanskrit library, and by his orders Maulānā 'Izzuddin Khālil Khān translated a work on philosophy, divinity and omens from Sanskrit under the name of *Dalāʾal i Firuzshāhi* (arguments of Firuzshāh). Another work on astrology was also rendered from Sanskrit into Persian in Firuzshāh's reign.<sup>24</sup> A work, called *Kitāb i Firuzshāhi* (book of Firuzshāh), dealing with physics, was also translated in the reign of that monarch from Sanskrit into Persian.<sup>25</sup>

In 1381 a work on veterinary science was translated from a Sanskrit author named Sālutar (said to be tutor of the famous Indian physician Sushruta): the translation was called *Qurrat ul mulk* (eye of the kingdom) and was said to be made by orders of Gayāthuddin Muhammadshāh Khilji,<sup>26</sup> though no king of that name is to be traced in 1381. If Sultan Gayāthuddin Taghlaq is meant, the date ought to have been some sixty years earlier. The Preface tells us that the translation was made "from the barbarous

Hindi into the refined Persian in order that there may be no more need of a reference to infidels." The literary achievement is commendable, though its motive is doubtless reprehensible and subversive of the true spirit of culture.

Though the Ghaznavides were the earliest to disseminate Persian in India, it was Sultan Sikandar Lodi in the early 16th century who was the first to systematically popularize it in the country by offering administrative posts to persons conversant with that language. The Sultan was himself a poet and wrote under the pen-name of Gulrukhi. Among the books translated from Sanskrit into Persian in his reign, the most note-worthy was a group of medical treatises collectively published under the name of *Tibb i Sikandari* (medical science of Sikandar). According to the historian Badāyuni, there lived in his reign a Hindu named Brahman who was so proficient in Arabic and Persian as to teach these languages to Muslims.<sup>27</sup> This instance is enough to show the extreme avidity with which Persian was being absorbed by the Hindus in India. This explains the cause of the remarkably large percentage of Persian works in Aryan and Dravidian languages. According to Dr. Tarachand, 30 per cent of the words in the Marathi language in the 18th century were Persian, while in the opinion of Dr. S. K. Chatterji, the Bengali of the 18th century was highly Persianized. Gujarat had been under Muslim dominance for nearly five centuries and had experienced the British rule for the last 150 years. This very naturally accounts for the large admixture of Persian and English words in the Gujarati language. Thus the terrors of foreign conquest were attended, as they often were, by the blessings of culture, a Sultan Mahmud heralding the peaceful advent of an Albiruni; and it was through the Muslim invasions that India indirectly profited by the enlightenment and culture of Iran in various directions.

*The Growth and Prevalence of an Indo-Iranian  
Language — Urdu*

BEFORE we proceed to discuss the achievements of the Mughals, who inaugurated the golden age of Persian literature in India, we may consider in this section an entirely different aspect of Indo-Iranian cultural unity as witnessed in the field of languages, and examine the powerful influence exercised by Persian on the growth and development of an Indian language — Urdu. The origin of Persian itself must therefore deserve our brief consideration. The Sāsānian language was Pahlavi, born during the Parthian regime, difficult to decipher and interpret and adulterated with the Semitic element, known as Huzwārish (obsolete). The patriotic Iranians rebelled against this element and evolved the Pāzend language, which is Pahlavi purified of all alien words. But the defective and intriguing Pahlavi alphabet still continued till the Arabs after the Conquest replaced it by their own superior script. The Iranians were alive to the advantage of adopting the Arabic script, took to it with alacrity, and the new language that arose was Persian, which in fact was Pāzend with a large admixture of Arabic words and written in Arabic characters. For more than two centuries the Arabs tried to force their own language on Iran and penalize the use of Persian, but the attempt ended in a dismal failure. As observed by Prof. A. J. Arberry,<sup>25</sup> too close contact with a desert-born culture tended to "saharize" ("desertize") the Persian spirit, which however discovered its full power only through its native speech, especially in poetry. In spite of the Arab interdict Persian remained the indigenous language of the Iranians though it was interlarded with 70 per cent of Arabic words and dressed in Arabic script. It would

In the beginning there were 60 to 70 per cent Hindi words in Urdu, which also followed the rules of Hindi grammar. About 1230 onwards, soon after Changiz Khan's invasion of Iran and Central Asia, many cultured Muslim families came over to India and settled in the North during the regime of the Slave dynasty.<sup>34</sup> As large numbers of Muslims began to emigrate from Iran to India, and as the Persian language began to be studied and appreciated more extensively and intensively, Urdu gradually relinquished its connection with Hindi and, allying itself with Persian, began to imitate Persian grammar and syntax. At one time Urdu was so simple as to be commonly used by the man in the street, but after being enriched by Persian and Arabic words it became a literary language. Then came a reform which decisively weighed the scales in favour of Persian as against Sanskrit, when Urdu switched on from Devanāgarī to the Arabic script.<sup>35</sup> There was a time when this Arabic script became so popular that even several Hindi works came to be written in that script even by Hindus.<sup>36</sup> In some Rajput and Malwa Hindu States the official language even today is Urdu and the Persian script is used instead of Devanāgarī.<sup>37</sup> Now Urdu was not only packed with Persian words, but the thoughts, themes, metres, poetic forms, construction of sentences, figures, conceits, diction and all were derived from Persian. In fact it appeared as if Urdu had been saturated with Persian and had lost its Indian origin and almost its separate entity under the overwhelming Persian influence.

With the rise of the Mughal power in 1526 the importance of Persian was recognized and it became the court language. Thereafter Persian began to exercise still greater influence on Urdu. Raja Todarmall, the Hindu Revenue Minister of Akbar, issued an order making a knowledge of the Persian language compulsory for all clerks in government

service.<sup>38</sup> He also decreed that all government accounts should be kept in Persian instead of in Hindi, as heretofore. These orders of Todarmall and Akbar's tolerant policy in general were instrumental in placing the Hindus in a favourable position, for they lost no time in pursuing their advantage by mastering Persian, to such an extent that, as H. Blochmann observes in his translation of Abul Fazl's *Āin i Akbari*, the Hindus almost became the Persian teachers of the Muhammadans.<sup>39</sup> Now Persian became almost the mother-tongue of cultured Muslims, while Arabic was restricted to the study of theology and philosophy. Since Persian became the court language and the language of the cultured people, Hindus (especially Nāgars and Kāyasthas) and the Parsis of India began to show their proficiency by writing their works in that language.<sup>40</sup>

Urdu now began to be cultivated under Persian influence: its status rose from a mere dialect into a language, and renouncing its true connection and origin with Hindi and Sanskrit, Urdu now became an adopted daughter of Persian. It was the Emperor Shah Jahān who is said to have designated Urdu as "*Urdu i mu'alla*" (exalted Urdu). When Urdu was enriched by Persian, it received the name of "*Rikhte*" (scattered: i.e. a language mingled with Persian words), for the word Urdu still stank of the camp and the bazar in the noses of some scholars, who disdained the use of Urdu and persisted in considering it the dialect of the rude masses. The learned Muslims in general Persianized Urdu, and in Urdu writers like Ātish, Nāsikh and particularly Ghālib everything except pronouns and verbs seemed to be Persian, so that it became difficult to determine whether one was reading Urdu or Persian. Thus Urdu was rapidly becoming a branch of Persian. Persian affected not only Urdu but the various provincial languages

derived from Sanskrit; and even the Dravidian languages of South India have not wholly escaped the Persian fascination.

The Emperor Shah Jahan, however, had a flair for Hindi, which flourished in his court. The Emperor himself spoke Hindi and patronized Hindi authors. During his regime Urdu flourished extensively in the Muslim kingdoms of South India, and it was only in subsequent times that it returned to the North, where it had originated. According to Saksena,<sup>41</sup> Iran and India came into intimate contact in the reign of Shah Jahan, who was however more inclined to Persian than to Urdu, with the result that Urdu migrated to South India where it was lavishly patronized by Muslim kings. During the reign of Aurangzebe there was less intercourse with Iran and the Persian dominance declined, leading to the prevalence of Urdu once more in the North instead of in the South.

The Persian hold over Urdu was so great that Urdu literature began to be transformed into Persian and there was hardly any indigenous element left in it. Now it became a convention to use in Urdu the poetic imageries peculiar to Persian literature. According to R. Saksena,<sup>42</sup> it became the fashion in Urdu literature to refer not to Indian heroes but to Rustam and Asfandiyār, not to Indian rivers but to Jaihun (Oxus) and Saihun (Jaxartes), not to Indian lovers but to Laili-Majnun and Shirin-Farhād. Owing to this bondage to Persian poetry, Urdu poetry began to appear unnatural, mechanical and unreal. When thoughts, themes, metres, imageries, poetic forms, tropes and diction were borrowed lock, stock and barrel from Persian, Urdu poetry ceased to adequately represent the Indian poet's thoughts and feelings as well as the atmosphere and environment of his country. Erotic imagery began to predominate in Urdu poetry as it did in Persian; Sufism began to penetrate into Urdu poetry as it had in Persian, and whether the Urdu poet was a Sufi or not,

he felt himself constrained to exploit Sufi thoughts and terminology in his verse from Persian sources.

Rhymed prose began to be written in Urdu in imitation of Persian literature. After the 13th and 14th centuries, during and after the Mongol invasions, the inflated and pompous style became quite common in Persian literature, continued under Safavi rule in the 16th century, and appeared sporadically even in the 19th. This bombastic style now made its appearance in Urdu literature. Many Urdu poets, being patronized by the State, by royalty or the nobility, began to indulge in eulogistic verse of their patrons in imitation of Persian poetry. In short the characteristics of Persian literature, desirable or otherwise, were largely and indiscriminately reflected in Urdu. After the Arab conquest, as shown previously, the Persian language contained nearly 70 per cent of Arabic words and appeared to be Arabicized: the same was the lot under Persian influence of the Urdu language, which became as it were another edition of Arabicized Persian. Just as it is essential to have a good knowledge of Arabic for a sound study of Persian, it is equally necessary to have a mastery over both Persian and Arabic in order to have proficiency in Urdu. Rarely has one language influenced the growth and development of another so profoundly as Arabic influenced Persian and as Persian influenced Urdu. Linguistically therefore the influence of Iran on India proved to be both powerful and enduring.

### III

#### *The Dark Age with its Silver Lining*

THE reigns of Hārūn ar rashid and his son Māmūn (8th and 9th centuries) constitute the golden age in the annals of Indo-Iranian cultural relations. Another golden age, longer and more brilliant, dawned in India with the advent of

the Mughals in 1526. The intervening period has been called the Dark Age, though from time to time the darkness was dispelled, as seen previously, by literary luminaries of the first magnitude like Albiruni. In the last years of the 14th century Taimur (Tamerlane) with his Tatars terrorized Asia and burst through Iran. Though himself a heartless barbarian, he was impressed by the art and literature of Iran, and when he swept through India a wave of Iranian culture overflowed the northern portion of the conquered country. As Pradwin<sup>43</sup> observes about Taimur: "What he diffused through Central Asia by his campaigns of conquest was after all Iranian culture, Iranian civilization." The period from the rise of the Slave dynasty (1206) to the advent of Babar (1526) was one during which India was influenced by Islamic architecture but not prominently by Islamic literature and culture. During this period, in the words of Santar Panikkar<sup>44</sup>— "No Averroes or Avicenna, no Tabari or Mas'udi is there to illumine the pages of Islam in India". The dread inspired by Taimur's invasion froze the genial current of scholarly souls and cast a damp over the growth of cultural activities between the two countries.

Before we settle down to the illustrious Mughal<sup>45</sup> dynasty in India and their patronage of Persian arts and literature, we may dwell upon various writers who served to strengthen the bonds of cultural unity between Iran and India. Resuming the thread of narration from the times of Albiruni, we find that the successors of Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi had shifted their capital from Ghazni to Lahore, and we consequently find three Persian poets of the time settling and writing in the latter city. Abul Faraj Runi, a Persian poet, esteemed and imitated by the great Anwari, was a panegyrist of the Ghaznavi kings and had settled in Lahore: he died not earlier than 1099. Mas'ud Sa'd



Salmān, a native of Gurgān, served Sultan Ibrāhīm Ghaznawī, who committed him to prison for 12 years on the charge of intriguing with the Saljuq king Malikshāh; he also arrived at the royal court at Lahore and died 1131. The well-known poet Hakīm Sanāi of Ghazni, the first of the distinguished trio of mystic poets (the other two being 'Attār and Rūmī), also arrived at Lahore and died in 1131.<sup>46</sup> In this connection mention may also be made of the eminent scholar Shaikh Ḥasan Saghānī of Lahore.

The historian Minhaj i Sirāj of Juzjān (born 1193), author of *Tabaqāt i Nāsiri*, came from Iran to India and was attached to Sultan Nāsiruddin Qubācha, who in 1228 was overthrown and killed by Shamsuddin Iltutmish, the third and greatest of the Slave dynasty. Minhaj i Sirāj thereupon hastened to worship the rising sun and accepted service under the conqueror, to whose son Nāsiruddin Muhammadshāh he dedicated his *magnum opus*, *Tabaqāt i Nāsiri*, in 1260.<sup>47</sup>

Another historian Muhammad 'Aufi of Bukhārā (died 13th century), already referred to previously, arrived in India and also attached himself to the court of Sultan Nāsiruddin Qubācha, to whose minister 'Ain ul mulk Husain al Ash'ari he dedicated his *Lubāb al albāb* (essence of essences), the oldest biographical work in Persian literature, dealing with about 300 poets in rather inflated language. When this Sultan was defeated and slain by Shamsuddin Iltutmish of the Slave dynasty of Delhi, 'Aufi, like Minhaj i Sirāj, accepted a post in the court of the conqueror, to whom he dedicated his *Jawāmi' al hikāyāt* (collection of anecdotes).<sup>48</sup> The courts of Nāsiruddin Qubācha and his rival Iltutmish were further graced by Nizāmuddin Ḥasan Nizāmi Nishāpuri (son of the famous Persian writer Nizāmi 'Arūzi as Samargandī, author of the *Chahār Maqālah* (four discourses), who wrote *Tāj ul ma'āsir* (crown of

histories), Fakhruddin Mubārakshāh, known as Fakhr i Mudabbir, the author of *Silsilat al ansāb* (genealogies of generations) and of a work named *Adāb al harb* (military tactics). The poets Bahāuddin Ushī, Tājuddin, Rizā, Shihāb i Muhmira and Amir Ruhāni flourished about the same time and were attached to the Delhi court.<sup>49</sup>

In the 13th century there flourished in India several noted Iranian poets like Sayyad Sirājuddin Sagzi, Amid ul mulk Lubaki, Mathar Karkhi, Jamālī Dehlavi and Badruddin Chāchi. In the 14th century India was proud to have such eminent Iranian poets as Ziā Nakhshabi and Mas'ud Beg as the contemporaries of Amir Khusru Dehlavi.

The illustrious Persian poet and man of letters Shaikh Sa'di Shirāzi (1185-1291), during his extensive travels, had been to India, and in his poem "*Bustān*" he narrates the story (which is however doubted by scholars) of a Brahmin in the temple of Somnath, who deceived the people by performing "miracles" in the name of the deity enshrined there, but who was detected and hurled into a well by Sa'di, lest the imposter might take revenge for the exposure of his fraud.<sup>50</sup> It cannot be definitely settled whether there was a meeting between Sa'di and his fervent admirer Amir Khusru Dehlavi in India. Sa'di is said to be among the first to compose verses in Urdu, an incomplete knowledge of which he picked up during his Indian travels. Prof. Browne<sup>51</sup> only refers to this hearsay, which remains unsupported by any authentic evidence.

But now the darkness of the benighted age extending from 1206 to 1526, was irradiated by the rise of a star of rare brilliance—the famous Amir Khusru Dehlavi (died 1325), known as "*Tuti i Hind*" (parrot of India). According to Prof. Sa'id Nafisi<sup>52</sup> Amir Khusru was hailed as the Sa'di of India while his disciple Hasan Dehlavi won the title in later times of the Indian Hāfiz. Amir Khusru

was the first Urdu poet, but he sometimes wrote a mixed language, one line being in Urdu and the other in Persian. He has also contributed to Hindi poetry. In fact his language was the mother of the present-day Hindi and Urdu, and linguistically he was the earliest to bring about mutual understanding between the two great communities of India. Amir Khusrū was in language what Akbar and Dārā Shikoh were in matters religious—a bond of harmony between the Hindus and the Muslims. Amir Khusrū was the author of an Arabic-Persian rhymed lexicon and another Hindi-Persian rhymed dictionary, the latter being known as *Khālīq bārī* from its initial words. It was very popular, and its rhymes facilitated the study of Hindi and Persian by Indian children.” His well known book *Cheestān* (riddles: literally meaning “What is it?”) consists of a collection of very clever conundrums. He was a *bel esprit*, fond of hilarity and anxious to display his wonderful mastery over the language.

Some of his poems are written with such baffling ingenuity as to be read as Persian from right to left, but as Arabic when read from the opposite direction. He has also displayed his skill in writing poetry, using letters without any diacritical points, a feat which requires extraordinary command over the language. In imitation of Nizāmi Ganjavi he wrote in Persian the *Panj Ganj* (five treasures or collection of five poems). He expressed in poetry very subtle thoughts in figurative, exaggerated and artificial diction. Imitating his venerable Persian contemporary Shaikh Sa’di, Amir Khusrū composed exquisite odes, some of which in sweetness and charm remind us of Hāfiz. When Prince Khizrkhān, son of Sultan ‘Alāuddin Khilji, married the Princess Devaldevi, daughter of Karan Waghelā, the last unfortunate Hindu ruler of Gujarat, Amir Khusrū celebrated this very unhappy union in a pathetic poem “*Khizr wa Darā*”

(Khizrkhān and Devaldevi). In commemoration of Sultan 'Alāuddin Khilji's conquests, Amir Khusru wrote a work named "*Khatā'in al futaḥ*" (treasures of victories) which, according to Prof. M. Habib,<sup>34</sup> is full of exaggeration. Amir Khusru was inclined to mysticism and had a great love for music. His name will always be placed first among writers of Urdu and Indian-Persian literature.

Another luminary of the court was Shaikh Najmuddin Hasn, who was second only as poet to Amir Khusru. Compared to the brilliant Mughal regime the pre-Mughal period may appear rather infertile; yet the reign of 'Alāuddin Khilji was an oasis in the desert, and his court was graced by a group of distinguished men of letters who, in the words of the well-known historian of the age, Ziauddin Barni, made Delhi the envy of Baghdad, the rival of Cairo and the equal of Constantinople.

Before we come to the splendid patronage extended by the Mughal emperors to literature and art in India, the services of two Indian Muslim kings must merit our grateful acknowledgment. Kashmir had been conquered from the Hindus by the Muslims in 1339 and it was in 1586 that it passed into the hands of Akbar. One of the Kashmiri kings Sikandar Butshikan was an iconoclast, but the greatest and best of the Muslim sovereigns of Kashmir was Zain al 'ābedin 1417-1467, who was the forerunner of Akbar in religious toleration, abolition of the *Jaziya* tax, prohibition of cow-slaughter and in the freedom given to the Hindus to build their places of worship. He personally abstained from eating flesh, adhered faithfully to one wife, encouraged painting and music, and, what is more to our purpose, ordered the translation into Persian of various works from Sanskrit, Arabic and other languages.<sup>35</sup>

The first Hindus to study Persian in Kashmir were the Sapru pandits. There was a Kashmiri Brahmin, named

Bodī Bhatt, who, according to the historian Ferishta, knew the *Shāhnāmeh* of Firdausī by heart and translated all its 60000 couplets into Hindī verse. He was also the author of a Persian work on music, called *Zain*, after the name of his great patron and benefactor, Sultan Zain al 'ābedin.<sup>57</sup>

Another man with a golden heart was Zain ul 'ābedin's contemporary king Husainshāh of Bengal, who was a believer in Hindu-Muslim unity and the founder of the Satya Pir cult—the forerunner of the *Din i Ilāhī* or the Divine Faith of Akbar. Husainshāh was also a patron of vernacular literature and art, and it was by his orders that the *Bhāgwat* was translated into Bengali by Mālādhār Vasu. The *Mahābhārata* was also translated during his regime.<sup>58</sup> Culture often follows the flag of conquest: the Muslims, with few exceptions, came to India not to plunder and depart but to conquer and settle down, and so too did the Persian language, which established its importance, not indeed through bloodshed but in peace, as one of the principal languages of North India. We thus find that even in this so-called Dark Age Persian continued to prosper, and there were instances, some of them rare and brilliant ones, of cultural contact between Iran and India, effected either by poets, scholars, or enlightened monarchs.

#### IV

##### *The Pre-Mughal Age*

REVERTING to Iran, subdued by the Mongols, we again find instances of such contact, for the lure of India was as besetting as it ever was. In the times of the Ilkhānī ruler Ghāzān Khān (1295-1304), celebrated as a generous patron of science and literature and as a great philanthropist, there flourished the great historian Rashīduddīn Fazlullāh, author of the *Jāmi' ut tawārikh* (compendium of histories).

He was a rare prodigy, being historian, statesman, physician, patron of arts, bibliophil and a public benefactor. His undoubted merits soon brought him into prominence and Ghāzān Khān appointed him his prime minister. His *Letters* are, however, more immediately suited to our purpose, because in one of them we are told of his having been deputed to India to bring such drugs and spices as were not obtainable in Iran.<sup>59</sup> Fourteen years after the death of Ghāzān Khān, Rashiduddin was executed in 1318 on the false charge, trumped up against him by the malevolent courtiers, of his having attempted to poison the king.

His contemporary Fakhruddin Ibrāhīm Hamdāni, better known by his pen-name 'Irāqi, happened to join a group of dervishes and come over to India where he became the disciple of Shaiikh Bahāuddin Zakariya of Multan. This saint was so pleased with 'Irāqi's poetical abilities that he bestowed on him the hand of his daughter in marriage, and after 25 years named him his successor. The nomination was however disputed by the other dervishes, and 'Irāqi thereupon left India for Mecca and Medina. He died in 1289.<sup>60</sup>

The celebrated poet Hāfiz (died 1393?), unrivalled in his lyrical raptures, bore excessive love for his city Shirāz, which in his poems he prefers to the heavenly regions. He respectfully declined the invitation of Sultan Gayāthuddin bin Iskander of Bengal, but, accepting that of Sultan Muhammadshāh Bāhmāni of South India, he made preparations to leave home. But the first sight of the sea filled him with such trepidation that he apologized to the monarch and returned to his city. Had Hāfiz been less immoderate in his local patriotism and more inclined to travel like his predecessor Sa'di, this nightingale of Shirāz would have rejoiced to find in Indian orchards buds and blossoms of

variegated hues and perfumes, to which he would have poured forth his heart in profuse strains of unpremeditated art. In Hāfiz is lost the rare chance of establishing an Indo-Iranian contact, which would have been highly esteemed by both countries and which would have immortalized their age-long connection in imperishable verse.

Taimur in spite of his atrocities had a soft corner in his heart for artists and scholars. He patronized the great Persian man of letters Al Īrūzābādī, who compiled the monumental dictionary *Qāmus* (ocean), and is said to have spent five years of his life in India. He died in 1414.<sup>91</sup>

Shāhrukh, son of Taimur, has been unanimously eulogized by historians as a generous patron of literature. One of his proteges was Kamāluddīn 'Abdur razzāq Samarqandī 1413-1482, the author of the great historical work *Mata' as sa'dain* (dawn of the two auspicious planets). He was found to be so capable that at the early age of 29 he was chosen by Shāhrukh to lead a special mission to the Indian king of Vijaynagar, where he stayed for three years, and of which place he gave a detailed narrative in his history.

The true Iranian Renaissance in India appeared with the advent of the Mughals, and Bābar with his innate sense of culture and refinement, taste and art was its early representative. One of the rulers of Iran during the latter half of the 15th century was Sultan Husain Bāiqarā, the brother of Bālar's queen and a true patron of letters, whose court at Herāt was immortalized in the literary annals of Iran by a galaxy of brilliant writers and artists. Iran had again reached its apex of culture in the reign of Sultan Husain when it was overwhelmed by Isma'īl Safavī, who started the famous Safavī dynasty in 1499. Sultan Husain and the literary atmosphere of his court largely contributed to the formation of his kinsman Bābar's culture, and Bābar now swooped down on Delhi, extinguished the reigning

Lodi dynasty by defeating and slaying the Pathan king Ibrāhīm, and inaugurated in 1526 a dynasty which till 1707 extended its power over the whole country and ceased to exist in reality only in 1857:

Bābar had only four more years to live in India but his equally gifted son Humāyun imprinted on this country the stamp of Iranian culture which was to endure for generations. Defeated by Sher Shāh, Humāyun with his courtiers fled to Iran and remained for years in intimate contact with Iranian culture as it existed in the days of Shāh Tahmāsp Safavi. A wall-painting of the two monarchs in the Chihil Sutun (forty pillars) Palace at Isphahan still serves as a reminder to us of that memorable sojourn, which in the annals of Indo-Iranian culture proved as fruitful as that of Prince Charles in France after his father's fall and during the Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell. The literary lights of England, who accompanied Prince Charles, were deeply imbued with French ideals, which blossomed on English soil after the Restoration of 1660 into the Drydenian age and heralded the advent of the "correct" and classical period of the 18th century. Humāyun's stay in Iran also bestowed a definitely Persian character on Indian culture, and though he himself survived his restoration to the throne only by a few months, the seed of Persian influence had been cast on congenial soil and was to yield an abundant harvest in the reigns of his successors. It was after Humāyun's sojourn in Iran that the scholarly intercourse between Iran and India was accelerated, and North India distinctly gained by the contact as will be seen below.

The House of Taimur in Iran may be divided into three groups:<sup>62</sup> (1) The branch that ruled at Samarqand: to this branch belonged Taimur's son Shāhrukh, his son Ulugh Beg and another famous son Bāsanqar Mirzā,



celebrated for his munificence to poets, painters and calligraphers. (2) The next branch was equally illustrious, if not more, and ruled at Herāt: to this group belonged Sultan Husain Bāqarā and his great minister Mir 'Alī Shīr Nawā, who by his own literary endeavours and his lavish patronage of men of letters transformed Herāt into a great centre of learning like Baghdād or Cordova of the past. Sultan Husain Bāqarā proved to be the last Timurid king, the House being extinguished in 1499 by Isma'il, the first king of the Safawī dynasty. (3) But we are here principally concerned with the third Timurid branch led by Zahiruddin Muhammad Bābar 1483-1530, whose name is familiar even to Indian school-children as the founder of the Mughal dynasty in India in 1526.

## V

### *The Golden Age of the Mughals*

BĀBAR, in name and deed a "lion", was sixth in descent from Taimur and had succeeded his father 'Umar Shaikh Mirzā in the petty kingdom of Ferghana at the age of twelve. He was not only a valiant soldier, but a typical knight-errant of the age of chivalry. As Stanley Lane-Poole<sup>61</sup> observes, to the daring and restlessness of the nomad Tatars he joined the culture and urbanity of the Persians. Bābar was a Turk on his father's side and a Mongol on his mother's, and he could write elegant poems in Turki, which was his mother-tongue. His *Memoirs* in the same language has also commanded deserved popularity. Gifted with rare strength, courage and resourcefulness, this lion's whelp, though beset on all hands by enemies, proved equal to the occasion. During his early life, which reads like a romance, he thrice captured and thrice lost Samarkand, the capital of Taimur. His inveterate foe was the Uzbek

leader Shaibak Khān or Muhammadkhān Shaibāni, who defeated him in 1510 and deprived him forcibly of his sister Khānzādeh Begam, who was compelled to marry her abductor. But Bābar was luckily befriended by Shāh Isma'il Safavi, who defeated and killed Shaibak Khān and restored the persecuted lady to her brother. The savage Shaibak Khān met with a savage end: his body was dismembered and the limbs distributed among several cities. In accordance with the barbarous custom prevalent in those days, his skull, set in gold, was made into a drinking-cup for Shāh Isma'il. It was with the help of the Iranian troops of Shāh Isma'il that Bābar ultimately regained his lost cities.

But now a different and far greater scene of adventure allured his insatiable spirit. Finding North India in a state of anarchy, ruled by the incapable and unpopular king, Ibrāhim Lodi, Bābar seized the opportunity of his lifetime, and bursting through the Panjab he defeated and slew Ibrāhim at Pānipat, the memorable field which has often decided the destinies of dynasties. There was however a great difference between Bābar and the various preceding Muslim adventurers like Mahmud Ghaznavi and Muhammad Ghorī. Such enterprising chiefs came to destroy or plunder or slake their fanatic zeal with the blood of non-Muslims and return with untold wealth to their countries. Bābar rather came to conquer, build an empire and settle down in India, identifying the interests of the Mughals with those of their Indian fellow-countrymen. As Bābar was assisted by Shāh Isma'il Safavi, so too was Humāyun protected by Shāh Tahmāsp, son of Shāh Isma'il, when the Mughal king was defeated and hunted out of India by the Afghan king Sher Shāh Sur in 1540; it was also with the help of Iranian troops that Humāyun in 1555 regained the throne of Delhi from Sikandar Sur. Here was a rare instance of a Mughal Indian father and son being assisted

by an Iranian father and son, and the concord so established between the royal dynasties led to progressive cultural relations between the two countries and the increasing migration of Iranian scholars to the courts of India.

But there were other reasons also that could account for this migration. With the change of dynasties there was a change of creed in Iran. The Safavis were Shi'as, and the Shi'a faith now became the State-religion, exercising far-reaching effects on the life and manners and consequently on the literature of Iran. The Safavi kings were occupied not only in the propagation of the Shi'a faith but in warlike engagements against the Sunni kingdom of Turkey, which left them little time for promotion of artistic and cultural pursuits. The Safavi rulers were intolerant in religious matters: even Sufism was ignored, and such of the Sufi poets as were not Shi'as found themselves debarred from royal favour. This attitude of the government was detrimental to the spread of Sufism and the progress of poetry. Again, the Safavi kings did not appreciate panegyrics, which were now addressed to the Imāms. The age of poetry was over; that of dry, formal and fanatical theologians had succeeded, and the glory of Iran seemed to have received a temporary set-back. In Iran, as in all autocratic countries, it was the kings and their policy that dominated the thought, religion and consequently the literature of the land. As Prof. Browne<sup>64</sup> observes, it was not lack of talent but lack of patronage that made the list of Safavi poets so meagre.

Hence from the beginning of the Safavi dynasty the garden of Persian literature slowly began to wither, and Jāmi, who flourished in the times of Sultan Husain Bāiḳarā, has been considered the last poet of the classical epoch. Herat, the great art-centre of the Timurid kings, declined in importance, and Iranian poets, artists and scholars were attracted to India, considered in those days as the land

flowing with milk and honey, where the means of life were as abundant as they were cheap. The Indian kings in general and the Mughal emperors in particular were renowned for their munificent patronage of men of letters. Pandit Jagannāth, for instance, had once paid a very high compliment to the Mughal emperor Shāh Jahān by his remark "*Delhishwarorā jagdishwarorā*," which means,—only the lord of Delhi or the Lord of the world (can fulfil my wishes). Such being the case, there was no wonder if the Iranian birds were increasingly attracted to a place where the necessities and even the comforts of life were plentifully available. In those days the aspiration nearest the heart of a scholarly Iranian was that he might be able to proceed to India for the betterment of his prospects.

From 'Ali Akbar Shahābi's book<sup>65</sup> two quotations may be cited which serve to show the love that certain Iranian poets bore to India, the land of their adoption. The Iranian poet Abu Tālib Kalim Kāshāni, who, according to Prof. Browne,<sup>66</sup> was poet laureate of Shāh Jahān, reveals his admiration for India in the following words:—

*"Tauān bihišt i durcam guftanash badin ma'ni,  
Ke har kē raft as in bustān fashimān shud":*

(It, i.e. India, can well be called a second paradise, for he who has departed from this garden has always repented for it).

Another poet 'Ali Quli Salim shows how Iranian scholars gained by contact with India:

*"Neest dar Irānzamin sāmān i tehsil o kamāl;  
Tā najāmad suē Hindustān hennā rangin nashud:"*

(There are no means of acquiring gain or proficiency in Iran: till the henna plant goes to India it

will not display its (red) colour.)

The emperor Humāyun was a valiant soldier but a man of easy-going nature, endowed at the same time with scholarly tastes, and he used to carry with him a select library in his expeditions. The most important poet in his court was a Persian, Maulānā Muhammad Qāsim, who wrote under the pen-name of Kāhi. His court was also graced by another Iranian, Mir 'Abdul Latif Qazwini, who was famous for his scholarship.<sup>67</sup>

The reign of Akbar in the 16<sup>th</sup> century may well be considered the golden age of Indo-Iranian contacts as was the reign of Naushirwān in the 6<sup>th</sup> and the age of Hārūn and Māmūn in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries. According to Maulānā Shibli,<sup>68</sup> there were 51 Iranian poets who left their mother-land and prospered at the court of Akbar. According to the historian Badāyuni in his *Muntakhab al tawārikh* (selections of history), quoted by Maulānā Shibli, there were in the court of Akbar 167 poets, most of whom sang in Persian or claimed Iran as their mother-land. Among the famous "*Narratnas*" (nine gems) of Akbar's court, Faizi and his gifted brother Abul Fazl were most prominent. In the opinion of Prof. M. 'Abdul Ghani,<sup>69</sup> the greatest poet in Indian-Persian literature after Amir Khusru was Faizi (1547-1595), who was also a sound scholar of Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit. Claud Field<sup>70</sup> relates that Faizi, assuming a Brahmin's disguise, studied Sanskrit from a learned Pandit, who was so completely deceived as to bestow the hand of his daughter in marriage to his disciple. On knowing the truth the Pandit was about to commit suicide, but was won over by Faizi. In imitation of the poem "*Laili wa Majnun*" of Nizāmi Ganjavi, Faizi composed in Persian the famous love episode of "*Nal Daman*" (Nala and Damyanti). He also wrote a commentary on the *Qurān*, using only letters without diacritical points. He was

honoured in Akbar's court with the title of "*Malek ush sha'arā*" (king of poets). Faizi had also studied medicine and was noted as a *Unāni* physician (skilled in Greek medical science). The following couplet of Faizi in praise of the "sati" (the Hindu widow, voluntarily offering her life on her husband's funeral pyre) has come down to us from the corridors of time:—

"*Misl i Hindu zar kasi dar 'āshiqi mardāneh neest:  
Sukhtan bar sham' i murdeh kār i har parwāneh neest.*"

(None is so heroic in love-making as the Hindu woman; it is not every moth that will immolate itself on the burning pyre).

By the encouragement and under the patronage of Akbar, Sanskrit was studied by the Muslims, and many Sanskrit works, like the *Bhagavad Gītā*, *Life of Krishna*, *Yogatāsishtha* etc., were translated into Persian. The bigoted historian Badāyuni, to whom Akbar's tolerant policy was gall and wormwood, was himself conversant with Sanskrit and he completed his translation of the *Kāmāyāna* in 1589. His contemporary Hāji Ibrāhīm Sarhīndi translated the *Atharvaveda* into Persian. The *Tūjak* (a work on astronomy) was translated in the reign of Akbar by Mukammulkhān Gujarāti, while Faizi himself was responsible for an abbreviated version of the *Mahabhārata* as well as of the *Līlārati* (a work on mathematics by Bhāskarāchārya of the 12th century A.D.).<sup>71</sup>

Faizi's brother Abul Fazl was still more renowned as diplomat, historian and the right-hand man of Akbar. Both brothers had liberal views on religion and they unmistakably shaped the religious policy of Akbar. Both noble-hearted brothers were detested for their tolerance by the fanatics of the times, who with undisguised delight

revelled in the early death of Faizi. On that occasion a bigot named Fasih revealed the malevolence of his heart by composing the following verse:—

*"Faizi i bidin chun murd, sāl i wafātash Fasih  
Gust sagi as jahān rafteh ba hāl i qabih."*

(When the irreligious Faizi died, Fasih remarked about the year of his death—the dog departed from the world in a vile manner).

The words *sagi-az jahān rafteh ba hāl i qabih* are a chronogram which according to the Abjad system of calculation reveals the date of Faizi's death in 1004 A.H. or 1595 A.D.

Sometimes there was intolerance on the part of the writer as well as on that of the authorities. Prof. Browne<sup>72</sup> quotes the instance of the Iranian author Sayyad Nurallāh ibn Sharif al Mar'ashī Shushtari, who came to India where he was sentenced to death for his Shi'a opinions, aggressively expressed in his work "*Majālis al muminin*" (assemblies of believers).

Abul Fazl's *chef d' oeuvre* was the famous *Akbarnāme*, part of which is known as the "*Āeen i Akbari*," but the part has become more famous than the whole. Unfortunately the style of Abul Fazl is extremely inflated and bombastic, and his verbosity and pomp of words arrest the progress of the bewildered reader. Abul Fazl must remain the most glaring instance of turgidity of language in Indo-Persian literature. He was engaged in diplomatic correspondence with various kings of the world, and such was the awe inspired by his masterly expression that, as commonly reported, those kings had a greater dread of Abul Fazl's pen than of his master's sword.

Another gem from among the "*Navratnas*" (nine jewels) of Akbar's court was 'Abd ur Rahim Khānkhānān (son of

the general Behrāmkhān), famous as patron of men of letters not only in India but in Iran and even in Turkistan. As patron he can be compared to Mir 'Ali Shir Nawāi, the renowned minister of Iran in the latter half of the 15th century. The poet Kausari<sup>73</sup> says about him:

"*Ke nabaravad dar sahhundānān i dāurān  
K'haridār i sahhun juẓ K'hānkhānān:*"

(Among the aesthetes of the age there was no such purchaser of words as Khānkhānān).

This liberal-minded Muslim nobleman also patronized Goswāmi Tulsidāsji, the author of the famous *Rāmācharit-mānasa*. This great Hīndī classic, based on the *Rāmāyana* of Vālmiki, is regarded as the Bible of North India, and it is surprising, though gratifying, to find that it was written under Muslim patronage. Like his father, 'Abd ur Rahim was a military commander, and for his victory over Gujarat, Akbar, who always loved him as a brother, honoured him with the title of Khānkhānān (lord of lords). Khānkhānān was himself a poet, composing poems in Persian, Arabic, Turkish, Sanskrit and Hīndī under the *nom de plume* of "Rahim". His memory will ever be cherished by Hindus and Muslims as a generous patron and promoter of Hindu-Muslim culture.

Many Persian poets and scholars flourished in the court of Akbar, but a reference could be made only to a few of them. The poet 'Urfī (died 1590), who hailed from Shirāz, was a highly conceited man. He once observed that the reason why Sa'di was proud of Shirāz must have been that he had the prescience that Shirāz would in future give birth to him ('Urfī)! By reason of his presumptuous and carping nature he could not get on with any one. He wrote odes and *qasidas* of high quality. The Iranian Muhammad Husain Naziri (died 1612), hearing the fame of Khānkhānān,



had come over from Nāhāpur in Iran to Agra, but had made Ahmedabad his permanent home. His style was simple, and in sweetness and beauty he is considered the *Qāzi* (the great poet of Iran of the 19th century) of his age.

Another Iranian, Mullā Zuhuri of Turshiz (died 1615) also arrived from Khorāṣān to India, settled in Ahmednagar and rose to be the poet laureate of the kingdom. He respectfully declined the Khānkhānān's invitation to come and settle in Agra. He wrote an introduction named "Seh nass" (three prose essays) to a collection of poems entitled *ʿAṭras* (new fruit) by king Ibrāhīm 'Adilshāh of Bijāpur. Prof. M. 'Abdul Ghani, in the appendix to his work<sup>74</sup> referred to above, has quoted the whole introduction *in extenso* from which it appears that Zuhuri in verbosity and pomposity of language could throw even Abul Fazl into the shade. Zuhuri displayed great skill in flattering his king. He possessed remarkable descriptive powers and rare imaginative capacity, though his inflated style makes it difficult for the reader to appreciate him at his true worth. As Prof. Ghani observes, 'Urfi was great in thought, Zuhuri in description but Naziri Ahmedābādī in both. A poet of liberal views and Sufi tendencies, named Ghazālī, being persecuted in Iran, came to the Deccan and thence migrated in the times of Akbar to the imperial capital, where he was appointed poet laureate, which post he held till 1572.<sup>75</sup> Prof. Sayyad 'Abdul Wahhāb Bukhārī<sup>76</sup> records that in Akbar's court there flourished a Hindu poet, Rājā Manohar, who achieved such remarkable success by his poetry, that it was sent to Iran, where it was eulogized for its elegance. Thus the court of Akbar, the enlightened and sympathetic monarch, proved to be the centre not only of Indo-Iranian but also of Hindu-Muslim cultural harmony.

The progress of Persian in the South of India was not far behind its prevalence in the North, for the South also

could boast of great patrons of learning and art, and was as proud to have eminent scholars and poets as it was to have distinguished generals in its courts. Sultan Ibrāhīm 'Adilshāh of Bijāpur was himself a scholar and a poet, and, as mentioned previously, a patron of Mullā Zuhūrī Tarshizi of Iran. Under the Qutbshāhis of Golconda there flourished a romantic Hindu poet, Lachmi Nārāyaṇ Shafiq of Aurangābād. He also wrote a prose work, the *Gul i ra'na* (charming flower), dealing with the lives of Indian poets of Persian origin, and another, describing Persian poets who had settled down in India. The Nawāb Wālājāh I of Madras was patron of letters and in his court at Arcot flourished the Hindu author, Lālā Makkhanlal (18th century), who wrote under the pen name of "Khirad" and won renown particularly as an ingenious writer of chronograms. Mahārāja Ānandrāj, the ruler of Vijaynagram in the Madras State, was himself a distinguished scholar and famous for his patronage of learning. "The greatest lexicon of the Persian language so far compiled" was produced in his reign by Muhammad Bādshāh, and appropriately named *Farhang i Ānandrāj*, to commemorate the name of his royal patron.<sup>77</sup> It will thus be seen that scholars and rulers of the South, both Hindu and Muslim, were almost as enthusiastic as their Northern *confreres* in their devotion to Persian, the language of culture, which, in the words of Stanley Lane-Poole<sup>78</sup> had risen to be the Latin of Central Asia.

## VI

### *The Age of the Mughals — Royalty and Commonalty*

IRAN is a country of which the people are devoted lovers of song and poetry as if born under a rhyming planet. As Sir R. P. Masani observes,<sup>79</sup> an Iranian is born with a song on his lips, and he lips in numbers for the numbers

come. Babar and his descendants had inherited this legacy, and in the midst of their campaigns and heavy administrative work found time to indulge in the poetic vein. Being poets themselves they were quite competent to judge the worth of the numerous poets that flourished at their courts. A few instances from their poems may be cited largely from 'Ali Akbar Shahābī's book." Babar, who wrote his memories in Turkish prose, could compose graceful poems in Persian, and the following verse reveals the epicurean side of his nature:

*"Nacruz o narbahār o mai o dilbari khushast;  
Bābar ba a'esh koosh ke 'ālam du bārah neest;"*

(The new year day, the spring season, wine and the beloved are all pleasant: oh Babar, indulge in enjoyment, for the world will not appear again).

Babar had a weakness for the good things of life, including the forbidden juice of the grape, and cherished a great liking for fruits of all climes and times. The mango, which can claim to be called the national fruit of India, was particularly favoured by the Mughals who called it the *fakhr uth thamar* and *ashraf uth thamar* (the glory of fruits and the noblest of fruits). When in India Babar tasted the mango, the queen of fruits, his delight knew no bounds and found expression in the following verse:

*"Ze uasf i āmbek chun guyam ke chun ast?  
Ke az rashk i sharābash shahad khun ast:  
Ze nām i oo chun giram lazzat i qand  
Zabān bā kām o lab bā lab shatead band."*

(How can I eulogize the merit of the mango? Out of jealousy for its juice even honey is transformed into blood. When by the very name of the mango

I realise the savour of sugarcandy, my tongue sticks to my palate and lip to lip.)

Humāyūn was valiant like his father, but was also chivalrous, generous to a fault and a bibliophil. He also occasionally composed verses, his poems abounding in metaphors and subtle conceits. When defeated by Sher Shāh Sur, the unfortunate king composed the following extempore couplet:

*"Dar makidan tifi i tadbir i marā taqsir neest;  
Laik chun sāzam ke dar pistūn i qismat shir neest?"*

(the child of my endeavour is by no means at fault in sucking the breast of destiny; but what is to be done when there is no milk in that breast?)

Wine was the bane of Babar's house and in the following verses Akbar half-humorously bewails his attachment to the bottle:

*"Man bang nami khuram mai āreed,  
Man chang nami zanam nai āreed:  
Dushineh ze kui mai farushān  
Paimāneh i mai ba zar kharidam;  
W'a akrun za khumār sar gerānam;  
Zar dādam o dard i sar kharidam:"*

(I do not consume bhang but bring me wine: I do not play on the harp but bring me the flute. Yesternight with my gold I bought a measure of wine from the wine-sellers. Now as the result of intoxication my head is heavy: thus have I spent my gold and bought a headache!)

It is astonishing that though Akbar could neither read nor write, he could appreciate and even compose poetry.

Here is a *rubā'i* (quatrain) of Akbar quoted from Wahid Māzandarāni's recently published work.<sup>11</sup>

"*Az bār i guneh khamideh fushtam, cheh kunam ?  
Nai rāh ba masjid nai kanishtam, cheh kunam ?  
Nai dar saf i kāfir na Musalmān jāyam,  
Nai tūyaq i duṣakh na bihishtam, cheh kunam ?*"

(my back is bent with the load of sins: what am I to do? I can go neither to mosque nor church: what am I to do? I cannot associate either with unbelievers or Muslims, nor am I fit for hell or heaven: what am I to do?)

But among the Mughal royalty there was no greater devotee of Dionysus than Jahangir, whose drunken bouts were sometimes inspired by love and sometimes enlivened by his literary and aesthetic tastes. Though through excessive attachment to the wine-cup Jahangir had degenerated subsequently into a *roi fainéant*, it was still the same forbidden luxury that often stirred his fancy to flower into poetry. His Iranian queen Noor Jahan, celebrated alike for her beauty and intelligence, once happened to remark: "*Ilīāl i 'Id bar auj i falak huwaidū shud*" (the crescent, announcing the *Ramāṣān 'Id* festival, is manifested on the high skies): but the prince of toppers, who was dreaming of nothing but wine, observed: "*Kīlīd i maikadeh gum gashteh bud, paīdā shud*:" (it is rather the key of the tavern, which had been lost but is now recovered).

During the numerous poetic tussles between Jahangir and Noor Jahan, recorded in our literary annals, Jahangir once revealed the intensity of his passion in the following couplet:<sup>12</sup>

"*Dulbul nayam ke na'ra kunam dard i sar deham;  
Parwāneh am ke suḡam o dam bar nayāwaram:*"

(I am not a nightingale to shriek out my feelings and cause headache to others: I am rather a moth to consume myself without a breath of complaint).

But Noor Jahan went one better in her clever reply:

*"Paru'neh man nayam ke ba yak shu'leh jān deham,  
Shāma'am ke shab basuzam o dam bar nayāwaram:"*

(I am not a moth to fling away my life over a flash; I am rather a candle to burn through the night without a murmur of regret).

Jahangir once praised the beauty of Noor Jahan's eyes in the couplet:<sup>1</sup>

*"Tu mast i bādeth i husni, bafarmā in du nargis rā  
Ke barkhizand az khāb o nighē dōrand majlis rā:"*

(you are intoxicated with the wine of your beauty: order your narcissus-like eyes to awaken from sleep and keep watch over the assembly).

Noor Jahan in her astute reply asked him rather to beware of the mischievous effects of feminine glances:

*"Makun bidār ai sāqi ze khāb : nāz nargis rā,  
Ke badmastand o barham mīzanand filhāl majlis rā:"*

(oh cup-bearer, refrain from awakening my narcissus-like eyes from their amorous dream, for they are intoxicated and with their bewitchment will instantly plunge the assembly into tumultuous disorder).

Once on seeing a bent old man Jahangir seriously posed the question: "*Cherā kham gashteh mi gardand firān i*

*jahān دیدہ?*" (why do the experienced old people go about with curved backs?). Noor Jahan's reply was as thoughtful as it was poetic: "*Ba zir i khāk mijuyand aijām i jauāni rā.*" (because they seek in the dust their departed youth.)

Shah Jahan, the builder *par excellence*, was also a great patron of poets and artists. Once a Turkish king scornfully inquired of him why he should call himself Shah Jahan, which literally meant "king of the world", when his sovereignty was in fact confined only to India. Thereupon the Iranian poet Abu 'Tālib Kalim recited the following ingenious couplet:

*"Hind o Jahān ze rui 'adad chun barābar ast,  
Bar mā khitāb i Shāh i Jahān zān muqarrar ast:"*

(since according to the Abjad mode of computation the value of the words 'Hind' and 'Jahān' is the same, the king of India is justified in assuming the title *Shāh i Jahān* or king of the world).<sup>24</sup>

The poetic gift in Mughal royalty was not confined only to the sterner sex, for even princesses were occasionally found to burn incense to the Muse. Jahānārā Pādshāh Begam, the daughter of Shah Jahan, was a model of modesty and filial devotion, and with characteristic self-effacement she left to posterity the following touching verse to be inscribed on her grave:

*Bar maẓūr i mū gharibān neh chirāghī, neh gulī,  
Neh far i parwānah suẓad, neh sadāi bulbulī:"*

(on the grave of meek people like ourselves, neither lamps are lit nor flowers offered; neither does the moth burn its wings, nor does the wail of the nightingale tingle in that locality.)

Jahānārā was a princess of Sufistic tendencies and her grave can still be seen in Delhi near that of the famous saint Nizāmuddīn Auliā, the preceptor of Amīr Khusrū.

The poetic genius of the House of Babar ultimately effloresced in a poetess of rare merit and charm, whose poems are famous for the delicacy of their sentiments and the elegance of their expression. She was Zaibunnissā, the daughter of Aurangzēbe by his first wife, the Iranian princess Dilārā Bānu (also known as Dīl-rās Bānu and Rabi'a ad Durāni), who is buried in Aurangabad, under a tomb popularly known as "*Bili k̄a maqbara*". Zaibunnissā profited by the education that she received under the tutress Hāfiza Mariām of Nishāpur, herself an Iranian. Many love romances, as false as they are fascinating, have been woven round the name of this gentle princess of a retiring disposition: they are all discredited by Sir Jadunath Sarkar,<sup>45</sup> who reminds us that no mention of her love-intrigue with 'Āqilkhān or, of all persons, with Shivaji, the acknowledged champion of Hinduism and her father's sworn foe, or with any other person, is made in any work of Aurangzēbe's reign or even for a century after his death. The gossipy historian Khafikhān is silent about the love-affairs of Zaibunnissā, which, as J. Sarkar observes, are a fictitious growth of the 19th century and the creation of Urdu romancers, probably of Lucknow. Zaibunnissā had fallen a victim to Aurangzēbe's fury, being imprisoned in 1681 for her alleged complicity with her brother Prince Akbar, who had revolted against his father. But under the *nom de plume* of "*Makhfi*" (concealed) this nightingale poured forth her sorrow-laden spirit in song, and the slender volume of the *Diwān i Makhfi* occupies an honoured niche in the temple of Indo-Persian literature. A few instances indicative of her abilities in composing extemporaneous verses may here be cited.



Once Aurangzebe desired a maid-servant, to awaken him at cockcrow in early morning. Unfortunately that night the cock crew early by several hours, and the maid, implicitly following the royal instructions, awakened the emperor, who, realizing the situation, flew into a rage and exclaimed: "Sar buridan lāzam ast" (her head should be cut off). But Zaibunnissā befriended the petrified maid and mollified her sire's wrath by the couplet:

*"Sar buridan lāzam ast ān murgh i bihīngām rā;  
In pariṭaikaṛ cheh dānad waqt i subh o shām rā?"*

(better cut off the head of that unpunctual bird, for how is this fairy-faced maid to know the time of morning or evening?)

Once<sup>86</sup> a maid-servant of Zaibunnissā happened to drop a valuable mirror which was broken to pieces. She approached the princess with tears and confessed her fault in a poetic line: "*Az qazā āīneh i Chini shikast:*" (by ill-luck the Chinese mirror has been broken), but the forgiving princess soothed the sorrowful girl with a suitable rhyming verse: "*Khoob shud, asbāb i khudbini shikast:*" (well and good, for the means of vanity are destroyed).

Once an over-bold poet addressed the princess in the following lines:

*"Bulbul i ruyat shawam gar dar chaman binam turā,  
Man shawam parwāneh gar dar anjuman binam turā:  
Khudnumāi mikuni, ai shama' i mahfil, khoob neest,  
Man hami khāham ke dar yak pairahan binam turā:"*

(if I were to see you in a garden, I would become a nightingale for your rosy face: if I were to behold you in an assembly, I would flutter round you like a moth. Oh light of the assembly, it is improper

to show yourself off before all: I only wish I may observe you in dishabille, clad in one vesture).

The virgin modesty of Zaibunnissā was offended and she punished the presumption of the poet by composing the following beautiful lines:

*"Bulbul az gul bugzarad gar dar chaman binad marā,  
Butparasti kai kunad gar Barhaman binad marā?  
Dar sukhan makhfi shudan mānand i bu dar barg i gul,  
Macl i didan har ke dūrad dar sukhan binad riarā:"*

(the nightingale would rather leave the rose if he were to see me in the garden; how would the Brahmin worship the idol if he were to cast his eye upon me? I have concealed myself in words like the perfume in the rose-petals. He who wishes to see me may better find me in my verses).

The play on her *nom de plume* Makhfi (concealed) in the third line will be immediately apparent to the Persian reader.

With true Sufistic abandon Zaibunnissā says in one of her *ghazals* (odes) in the *Diwān i Makhfi*:

*"Kui 'ishqast ba nāmoos salām ast injā,  
Sad chun Mahmud ba har gusheh ghulāmast injā:  
Bādeh dar kash ke dar in bāzmeḡh i ḡadisehkhiz  
Harcheh juḡ bādeh buwad jumleḡ harāmast injā:  
Zehr i ḡham nush kun o lab ba shikāyat makushā,  
Ke shikāyat za alam shureḡh i 'āmast injā:"*

(here is the lane of love: peace be here to its reputation: a hundred sultans like Mahmud Ghaznavi will be found knocking about like slaves in every corner of it. . . .

Enjoy wine, for in this convivial but perilous company, everything save wine is tabooed. Swallow the poison of grief, but open not the lips of complaint, for complaining about pain is the custom only of the uninitiate populace.

To return from royalty to commonalty, reference may be made to brilliant Iranian poets like the poet laureate Mullā Zīā Gilāni, the poet laureate Tālib Āmulī and Muhammad Sufi Māzandarāni, who graced the court of Jahangir. Mention may also be made of the Iranians Abū Tālib Kalīm Kāshāni and Al Hāj Muhammad Jān Qudsi Mashadi, who both rose to be poets laureate in the court of Shah Jahan. Another poet who graced the court of the same monarch was Mullā 'Alī Rezā, who bore the pen-name of Tajalli and hailed from Shirāz. Shah Jahan was a stern iconoclast and destroyer of Hindu temples, and he is said to have demolished 76 temples in Benares alone.<sup>47</sup> Yet his fanaticism was fitful, not deliberate and systematic like that of Aurangzebe. It is one of the paradoxes of history that this same fanatic Shah Jahan was also interested in Hindu literature, patronizing the translation of Sanskrit classics when he was in the mood to do so. He was, for instance, the friend and patron of Kavindra Sarasvatī, the eminent scholar, poet and yogi of the times, and the preceptor of Prince Dārā Shikuh, who in a Sanskrit letter addressed to his guru compares him to Shankarāchārya.<sup>48</sup> By orders of Shah Jahan the *Prabodhchandrodaya* was translated into Persian by Munshī Banvalī Dās, the *Rāmāyaṇa* was rendered into Persian by Ibn Har Karan, and by the royal order 'Abd ur rashīd translated a Sanskrit work on algebra into Persian. In the reign of the same emperor the Iranian author Amin Qazwīnī wrote a historical work, the *Pādshāh-nāmah*. The court of Shah Jahan was also graced by a great

Hindu poet, Chandrabhān, who wrote under the pen-name of Brahman, and was fortunate enough to be favoured even by Aurangzeb.<sup>49</sup> Even Sāib Isphahāni (died 1670), the greatest Persian poet between Jāmi and Qāni, was attracted to India for a short period by the liberal patronage of the Mughal court. Prof. Browne<sup>50</sup> refers to Mir Abul Qāsim Tindariski (died 1640), who came to India and was drawn into the circle of the disciples of the Iranian Zarathushtrian mystic Āzar Kaiwān of Patna, through whom he imbibed an eclectic knowledge of Zarathushtrianism, Hinduism and Buddhism. In the reign of Shah Jahan the scholar-soldier Sayyad Abdullāhkhān Bahādur Firuz Jang during his expedition against Mewār came across a bulky Sanskrit work on veterinary science, named *Sēlotari*, which was translated by him into Persian.<sup>51</sup> As observed previously, the same work had been translated from Sanskrit as early as 1381.

Poetry is the glory of Persian literature both in Iran and India, but it naturally could not monopolize all the literary activities during the Mughal regime. Among the Iranian historians who came to India during the Mughal domination mention may be made of Khwāndmir 1475-1535, grandson of another great historian Mirkhwand, the author of "*Rauzat us Safā*" (garden of purity). Wearied with the restless political condition of Iran, Khwāndmir came over to India in the court of Babar and died in Humayun's camp during that emperor's invasion of Gujarat. Khwāndmir's greatest historical work is the *Habib us ser* (friend of biographies).

Among the numerous historians in Indo-Persian literature, besides Abul Fazl, already referred to, Mullā 'Abdul Qādir Badāyuni and Ferishta are most prominent. Muhammad Qāsim Ferishta was an Iranian born in 1570 at Astrābād near the Caspian Sea, but at the age of 12 he migrated with his father to India and settled at Ahmednagar and latterly

at Bijapur. He named his famous historical work the *Gulshan i Ibrāhimi* (Garden of Ibrāhīm) from the name of Sultan Ibrāhīm 'Adilshāh of Bijapur. This historical work is full of poetry and is couched in a verbose style which detracts from its historical merit. The same high-sounding flowery style can also be seen in other works of the age, for instance, the *W'aqāya'* (Incidents) of Na'matkhān 'Aālī, in the *Minābāzār* (Fancy Fair) of 'Irādatkhān and the *Ruqā'āt* (Letters) of Bedil. It is noteworthy that this high-flown and bloated style is conspicuous by its absence in writers of the royal family like Gulbadan Begam (daughter of Babar and authoress of the *Humāyun nāmah*), Salima Sultāna (the Persian poetess and niece of Humayun), Jahangir, Dārā Shikuh, Aurangzebe, Jahānārā Pādshāh Begum and Zaibunnissa.

The firm hold of the Persian language on the Indian mind is best seen in the very extensive scale on which Persian lexicography flourished in India right down to modern times, and according to Prof. Sa'id Nafisi<sup>92</sup> 90 out of 100 Persian lexicons in the world will be found to be compiled in India. The same professor cites the illustration of a lexicon, named *Āsaf al lughāt*, started by a scholar of Deccan Haidarabad, who has occupied 16 volumes though he is still in the midst of the letter "Te" (the fourth letter of the alphabet): by the time the work nears completion, we may well expect him to reach the 50th volume even on the most modest computation.

The Mughal age may well be considered the golden age of Persian literature in India. In the 16th and 17th centuries there was an incessant flow of poets and scholars from Iran to India. The establishment of the Safavi rule in Iran preceded that of the Mughal suzerainty in India only by about a quarter of a century. The Safavi regime was not fertile in great poetry: the rulers were intolerant,

and such of the Sufis and poets as were not Shi'as found themselves debarred from royal favour. This attitude was detrimental both to the spread of Sufism and the progress of poetry. As a result of this discouragement several well-known Persian poets emigrated to India, being further attracted thither by the lavish patronage extended to them in Muslim courts both in North and South India. The Safavi age could not boast of a single great poet, who could confidently be ranked among the masters. Literary history may have its slumps, but in this case it was not lack of genius but of court patronage that was mainly responsible for this doleful infertility. The Safavi age, though noteworthy in arts, is the age of stagnation in literature, while the same period represents Persian literature at its highest in India; and without fear of exaggeration it may be affirmed that in the duration between the enthronement of Babar and the death of Aurangzebe there were greater writers of Persian in India—the country of its adoption—than in Iran, the land of its nativity.

But though Persian was thus destined to play a conspicuous role in India, it was after all an alien tongue and could not therefore expect to assert its domination on a foreign soil for all time. Language may flourish extensively on a different soil though not with the natural freedom and unaffected ease that it manifests in the land of its birth. Language thrives best on the soil of its birth, but loses its original taste and relish when transplanted in a foreign country. Like an exotic introduced from abroad it may under favourable circumstances reveal its vitality but only at the cost of its spirit, its colour and its genuine flavour. The Hellenistic age of Greek literature, which continued with Alexandria as its chief centre for nearly three centuries after the death of Alexander the Great in

323 B.C., made a substantial contribution to philosophy, art and culture, and yet it never could recapture the first fine careless rapture, characteristic of the Periclean age of the 5th century B.C. in the motherland. The Alexandrian school of Greek poets revealed the same excessive display of learning, artificiality of expression and elaboration of form as was displayed by Indo-Persian writers. Prof. Browne<sup>93</sup> complains that the Persian used in India does not command the characteristic savour of Iran. The Persian language was once simple and pure, but it became artificial, elaborate and turgid after the Mongol conquest of Iran in the 13th century and continued such during the Safavi regime. In the first half of the 16th century those artificial florid writers passed with Babar into India, and became models to the Indians who were themselves prone to be turgid and bombastic. *This is the chief reason why good and chaste Persian has very rarely been produced or admired in India, where, as Prof. Browne<sup>94</sup> observes, we come across "Baboo Persian", which in its shortcomings is very similar to "Baboo English", used by the half-educated natives of India.*

At last the importance of the Persian language began to decline in India. In fact it had never been the language of the masses but had been confined to royal courts and upper class Muslims and Hindus, who learnt it for professional and cultural purposes.<sup>95</sup> Persian in India laboured under two disadvantages: it was circumscribed within royal courts, and it lacked vital contacts with the land of its birth. Its influence in India, powerful though it was, could not therefore be permanent. The *tour de force* displayed by an individual or a people may evoke admiration, but cannot, unless it be perfectly natural or instinctive, command popular recognition for all time. Long-continued imitation or adoption of a foreign language, however

well-developed or distinguished, at the expense of the mother-tongue or national language, is neither possible nor desirable. The Indians were now beginning to realize the awkwardness of writing in one language and speaking in another. Gradually but inevitably Urdu came into its own as Persian began to wane. It will however be remembered that Urdu owes to Persian practically everything except its birth. The Mughal power was now rapidly disintegrating, and the later Mughal rulers could not evince the same enthusiasm for literature nor afford to extend the same patronage to men of letters as their predecessors had done. This must account for the fall in numbers of poets then migrating from Iran to India. The British were becoming masters of India, and their substitution of Urdu for Persian as the court and official language of the country in 1835 tended still further to cut off India from the literary currents of modern Persia. At last when the suzerainty of India passed into British hands, even Urdu was replaced by English as the language of culture and enlightenment, and the *coup de grace* was finally delivered on Persian dominance in India.

The fate of the Persian language in India in the 19th century bears a striking resemblance to that of English at the present day. Persian was gradually eclipsed by Urdu, which had derived much of its power and charm from the language it was replacing. English also during its domination for a century and a half powerfully influenced the Indian languages, but after Indian independence was achieved it was time for it to step aside and yield the place of prominence to the regional languages and above all to Hindi, the national language of Free India.



## VII

*The Diffusion of Sufism in India*

From language and literature we pass on to mysticism. A separate volume would be needed to describe the influence of Islam on India, but it would be irrelevant to embark upon the subject, for this book deals only with Indo-Iranian contacts, and Islam is not an Iranian but an Arabian religion. But though we are precluded from writing on Islam, we can still dwell on the mysticism of Islam and Zarathushtrianism, which flowered largely on Iranian soil and bore the name of Sufism. Sufi mysticism has been rightly regarded the supreme manifestation of the Iranian mind in the spiritual sphere. The glory of Iran lies in its literature, particularly in its poetry, and the vast majority of its poets have been inspired by this Sufi mystic fervour. The Iranians have always been an easy-going people, fond of wine and the good things of life, susceptible to love and beauty, and it is not to be wondered at if their deep-seated spiritual yearning found expression in erotic and Bacchanalian imagery as it did in Sufistic poetry. This convention prevailed to such an extent that the fashion became fairly universal, affecting the bulk of Persian poetry, till it gradually began to decline from the 16th century.

The Sufi poet (and very often the poet was a Sufi or aspired to be one) usually fancied himself to be the *‘āshiq* (lover) of the *sanam* (Divine Beloved). Sufistic poetry is presented in a symbolic garb, divine inspiration being conceived as *mai* (wine), the monastery which inculcates the divine mysteries as the *maikhāneh* (wine-shop), the Sufi preceptor as the *Pir i Mughān* (keeper of the wine-shop), the state of *hāl* (ecstasy) induced by the wine as the *masti* (intoxication), and the aspirant to the *wasl ul wusul* (union of unions or divine union) as the *rind* (rake). Persian poetic literature

has been saturated with this mystic spirit which culminated in the rapturous *ghazals* (odes) of Hāfiz, which have thrilled his numerous readers to the core as few other poems have done. Urdu and Indo-Persian poetry, being an echo of the poetry of Persia, will be found to be permeated with the same erotic and Bacchanalian spirit from Amir Khusru downwards. Sufism bears a close resemblance to the Vaishṇava Bhakti cult of India, which has also found expression in extremely sensuous and erotic lyrics, for instance, in the Vaishṇava lyrics of Bengal and of Gujarat, represented prominently in the Gujarati poet Dayārām in the first half of the 19th century. Sufism has succeeded in mellowing down the stern character of Islam and presenting that faith in its highest and most spiritual form.

Among the various influences that went to mould the Sufistic creed, two Indian forces only can be appropriately considered here, the Vedantic and the Buddhistic. There has always been a marked resemblance between the mystical forms of approach to God of various nations, and the close similarity of the Sufi and Vedantic systems need not therefore come as a surprise. Both believed in monism and pantheism, in the illusory nature of all except the One Reality, in the theory that the soul is divine, being the eternal presence of God in man, and finally in the yearning of the finite soul for the Infinite. In practice both systems emphasized devotion, resignation to the Almighty Will, asceticism and self-mortification, passionate love of God, ecstasy which gives the aspirant a foretaste of the divine union, and the final absorption in the Supreme Being. When the Iranian Sufis came over to India, they found a kindred creed sympathetic to the cultivation of their own spiritual ideas, and therefore they completely lost sight of the sharp differences which divide Islam and Hinduism in matters of belief and custom, as mystics of different faiths usually do.

The Sufis also came under Buddhist influence and adopted the use of the rosary from the Buddhist *bhikkus* (monks). The Sufis were also impressed by the asceticism of Buddhism as also of Christianity: there is also considerable resemblance between the Buddhist theory of *Nirvāṇa* and the Sufi principle of *Fanā fi Allāh* (annihilation in God). But Buddhism had penetrated into Iran and Central Asia centuries before the rise of Islam itself through the endeavours of monks and missionaries, and its influence may therefore be regarded as a contributory cause of the origin of Sufism. Buddhism had influenced even the eclectic faith of Māni in Iran in the 3rd century A.D., and paintings and coins, in which Buddhist and Sasanian influences have been blended, were discovered at Bāmyān to the east of Kabul. Buddhism survived to exercise a peaceful and ascetic influence even after the advent of Islam. According to Nicholson,<sup>96</sup> there were Buddhist monasteries in Balkh, and the famous Sufi of the 9th century, Ibrāhim bin Adham, was once the king of Balkh, but, like Buddha, had renounced the royal power to become a derwish. The well-known Chinese traveller Huan Tsiang<sup>97</sup> of the 7th century A.D. also refers to the wide sway of Buddhism in Khorāsān, 'Irāq etc. right up to the borders of Syria. Central Asia was in fact dotted with Buddhist monasteries when Islam began to propagate its militant faith. In Balkh there was a famous monastery accomodating 1000 monks, known as *Naw rihār* (new monastery), which word was Persianized into *Naw bahār*.<sup>98</sup> Buddhism had prevailed in Turkistan as well as Afghanistan and Sindh, and the extensive scale of its prevalence may be judged from the fact that "but", which is the Persian word for idol, was, in the opinion of Sayyad Sulaiman Nadvi<sup>99</sup> only a corruption of "Buddha", whose images were in the later phases of that religion constantly worshipped by its adherents even in Muslim countries. We

thus see how the religion of a great Indian prophet influenced Iran and contributed to the development of the eclectic faith of Sufism.

Gradually Sufism began to be introduced into India where, as previously observed, it found a congenial soil not only in the minds of imaginative poets but in the hearts of its numerous saintly devotees. The renowned Persian mystic Husain bin Mansur al Hallāj, to whom numerous miracles and books have been attributed, was a good traveller, and according to Prof. Browne,<sup>100</sup> is said to have visited India in order to see the practice of the rope-trick. He returned to Iran, and for chanting his favourite expression *An al Haq* (I am God), this God-intoxicated mystic was put to death in 922 with excruciating tortures by fanatics who were incapable of realizing, even imaginatively, his spiritual raptures.

Another great Sufi, 'Ali bin 'Othmān al Jullābi al Hujwiri, who belonged to the village of Hujwir near Ghazni, was author of the oldest Persian treatise on Sufism named *Kashf al Mahjub* (Revelation of the Occult). He also arrived in India, where he expired at Lahore in 1075.<sup>101</sup> The famous Iranian Sufi Khwāja Mu'inuddin Chishti, who had settled in India at Ajmere, once shut himself up in a room in Shaikh 'Ali al Hujwiri's tomb, whence he emerged after forty days<sup>102</sup> and in an inspired couplet designated the departed Shaikh as "the bestower of treasures of both worlds". For that reason Sheikh 'Ali al Hujwiri is popularly known as Dātā Ganjibaksh (the generous bestower of treasures).<sup>103</sup> The well-known Sufi saint, poet and author Shaikh Fariduddin 'Attār, who had lived up to the patriarchal age of 111 years before he fell in 1230 by a Mongol sword, had also profited by a journey to India.<sup>104</sup>

India has been conquered more readily by the spiritual fervour of the *catena* of Sufis and by the loving benevolence

of Christian missionaries than by the sword of Islam or the cannon of John Bull. Sufism gradually began to be diffused into India where various Sufi orders, like the Chishti, Qādiri, Naqshbandi, Sahrawardi, Shattāri etc., were established. The Chishtiya order was founded by the first important Muslim missionary in India, Khwāja Mu'īnuddin Chishti Ajmeri (1136-1226), the doyen of Indian Sufis, who came from Chisht in Khorāsān and lies buried in Ajmer, where his shrine is regarded as a place of pilgrimage by his numerous Muslim and Hindu followers, who swarm thither from the length and breadth of India. At Pushkar in Ajmer, the scene of the Khwāja's activities, there is still to be found a clan of people calling themselves "Huvaini Brahmins", who are neither orthodox Muslims nor Hindus, but claim descent from the immediate followers of the great Muslim saint.<sup>105</sup> Akbar had boundless faith in this holy man: he annually visited his shrine and rushed to battle with the war-cry *jā Mu'īn* (oh Mu'īnuddin) on his lips. Another great Sufi, contemporaneous with Khwāja Mu'īnuddin Chishti, was Sayyad Ahmed Sultan Sakhi Sarwar, who died near Multan in 1181. To this Chishtiya order belonged Khwāja Qutbuddin Bakhtiyār Kākī, Khwāja Faridu'ddin Ganjshakar, Khwāja Nizāmuddin Auliā, Hazrat Amir Khusrū, Khwāja Nasiruddin Mahmud Chirāgh i Dehli and Sayyad Muhammad Gisudarāz of Gulburga.<sup>106</sup>

The Qādiriya order was founded by the famous "Baghdādī Pir" or "Pir i Pirān" Shaikh 'Abdul Qādir Gilāni (1077-1166), who belonged to Gilān, a village to the South of the Caspian Sea. The order was founded in India by Makhdum Shaikh Muhammad and carried on by his eldest son Makhdum Shaikh 'Abdul Qādir. Others of the order were Shāh Qumes and Mir Muhammad, commonly known as Miān Mir.<sup>107</sup>

The founder of the Naqshbandi order was Khwāja Bahāuddin Muhammad Naqshband (died 1388). This order

was introduced into India by Khwāja Bāqī Billāh. The well-known saints of this order in India were Shaikh Ahmad of Sirhind, Shāh Valiullāh and his four sons.<sup>108</sup>

The Sahrawardiya order was established by Shahābuddin 'Umar Sahrawardi (died 1234), who came from Sahraward, which is situated between Hamadān and Zanjān in Iran. To this order belonged the Indian saints Shaikh Bahāuddin Zakariya Sahrawardi, Shaikh Ahmed Ma'shuq, Ruknuddin and the famous scholar and globe-trotter Sayyad Jalāluddin, known as Makhdum i Jahāniān Jahāngasht.<sup>109</sup>

Among the minor fraternities may be mentioned the Shattāri order, founded by 'Abdullāh Shattār, who himself came to India and settled first at Jaunpur and then at Mandu, where he died in 1428. Among his saintly successors the most eminent are Shāh Muhammad Gauth of Gwalior and his disciple Shāh Wajihuddin of Gujarat.<sup>110</sup>

Besides the last-mentioned Shāh Wajihuddin Ahmedābādi, who died aged 88 in 1589, the next great Sufi, who made Gujarat his home, was Sayyad Muhammad Barahman of Patan. Among the four Ahmads who took a prominent part in the foundation of Ahmedabad we find the name of Shaikh Ahmad Khattu Ganjbaksh of Sarkhiz (a village near Ahmedabad), who died in 1446 at the venerable age of 111 years. His eminence in sanctity may be judged from the fact that he is regarded as one of the six greatest Muslim saints of India. Another village near Ahmedabad, named Watwā, can boast of its association with one of the greatest of Bukhāri Sayyads, Qutb i 'Ālam Burhānuddin Abu Muhammad 'Abdullāh, the paternal grandson of the great Sufi Jalāluddin Makhdum Jahāniān, referred to above. Qutb i 'Ālam died aged 68 in 1447, leaving 12 sons, the second of whom has always been regarded as the most popular of Gujarati saints. He is Sirājuddin Abul Barakat Sayyad Muhammad, better known as Hazrat Shāh 'Ālam

Bukhārī, who died aged 63 in 1474. Various miracles were attributed to him, and his monument in the suburb of Rasulābād near Ahmedabad has always been a place of pilgrimage to his numerous followers, who congregate thither to express their devotion annually on the 20th of the month of Jamādi II. Ahmedabad has been associated with Muslim saints ever since its foundation in 1411, and Gujarat has thus derived substantial benefit from Sufi mysticism.<sup>111</sup>

The Sufi cult spread even in Sindh where it was preached by Sayyad 'Othmān Shāh Marwandi, better known as Makhdum Lāl Shāhbāz Qalandar (13th century) and his disciples, and where the seed found a soil agreeable to its growth. Other well-known Sufis of Sindh are Shaikh Musā of the 15th century, the great-great-great grandfather of Abul Fazl, Shāh Karim of the 17th century, the great-great grandfather of Shāh 'Abdul Latif and Sachal Sarmast, the Sufi poet of the 18th century. But to think of Sufism in Sindh is to think of its crown and culmination as reached in Sayyad Shāh 'Abdul Latif 1689?–1752, whose poems are collectively known as the *Risālo*. He is a rare combination of a mystic and poet though he has won renown more as a poet and musician than as mystic or philosopher. Sindhis consider him another Hāfiz in his lyrical raptures, while in popular appeal he is in Sindh what Kabir is in the Hindi-speaking population of India.<sup>112</sup>

Sufism also spread in the East, and Bengal profited by the spiritual fervour of Shaikh Jalāluddin Tabrizi, the disciple of Khwāja Qutbuddin Bakhtiyār Kāki of the Chishtiya school. Some of the renowned Sufi poets of Bengal of later times were Sayyad Sultān, Daulat Qāzi, Hayāt Māmūn and Gharibullāh. Sufi mysticism proved to be infectious in its country-wide prevalence, and the Deccan was resolved not to be outdone in the spiritual race. It

could boast of several great Sufis like Sayyad Mazhar Wali of Trichinopoly, Sayyad Ibrāhīm Shāhid, Bābā Fakhraddīn, Shaikh Muntakhabuddin, Zari-Zarbakshi and the most eminent of Deccani Sufis—Muhammad al Husaini, known as Bandeḥ Nawāz Gisu Darāz of Gulbarga, referred to previously.<sup>113</sup>

As the Bhakti school of the Hindus united all persons of different castes and creeds into one spiritual fraternity, so too did the Sufi movement prevail peacefully but effectively among all classes and conditions of society, promoting fellow-feeling and a spirit of mutual understanding, which lie at the basis of that cultural synthesis, which has been silently, almost unconsciously, brought about in this vast sub-continent. Among the remaining Indian Sufi saints may be mentioned the names of Shaikh Salim (the religious preceptor of Akbar) and Sarmad (the Iranian spiritual mentor of Dārā Shikuh), both Sarmad and his royal disciple falling victims to the fanaticism of Aurangzebe.

This broad-minded and tolerant prince Dārā Shikuh was to the end of his life a pious Muslim: he was also a student of comparative religion and had studied the mystic aspects of Hinduism under his Hindu guru Bābā Lāl Bairāgi. Dārā was so impressed with the transcendental character of Hinduism that he used to declare openly that he had discovered the Tauhid (Divine Oneness) in its fullest implication only in the Vedānta. Among Dārā's numerous works was a booklet of 36 pages named *Majma' ul bahrin* or in Sanskrit *Samudra sangam* (confluence of two seas—Hinduism and Islam), in which he harmonizes Sufi principles with Hindu pantheism. Dārā was also the author of *Sirr al asrār* (secret of secrets), based on the *Upanishads*. By orders of the same prince the *Atharva Veda* was translated into Persian. Sardar K. M. Panikkar<sup>114</sup> invites our attention to Dārā Shikuh's recently published Sanskrit letter to the



great Hindu poet, scholar and yogi Kavindrāchārya, testifying to the writer's knowledge of Sanskrit and Hinduism. It was by order of Dārā Shikuh that a Persian version of the *Upanishads* was undertaken and completed by the Pandits in 1657. This Persian work was subsequently translated into Latin by the French *Arista* scholar Anquetil du Perron in the 18th century. The *Upanishads* in their Latin form were avidly consumed by Schopenhauer, to whom they came like a revelation, shedding a ray of hope and comfort on his dark and unhappy soul. His words of eulogy about the *Upanishads* will for ever ring in the ears of all true lovers of religion. He said about the *Upanishads*: "This incomparable book stirs the spirit to the very depths of my soul. . . . In the whole world there is no study, except that of the original, so beneficial and exhilarating. It has been the solace of my life: it will be the solace of my death."<sup>15</sup> But, be it noted, the *Upanishads* would not have reached the hands of Schopenhauer in the Latin version had they not first been translated into Persian by orders of Dārā Shikuh.

Among the royal devotees of Sufism, besides Dārā Shikuh, mention may be made of Jahānārā Pādshāh Begam and Zaibunnessā (sister and daughter respectively of Aurangzebe) and the tragic poetic figure of Abu Zafar Bahādurshāh, the last of the Mughals, dethroned by the British in 1857. Together with the Iranian Sufis who came to India numerous Iranian Muslim missionaries also migrated to this country to propagate their faith. Prof. A. M. A. Shushtari<sup>16</sup> gives a list of these missionaries from which only a few names may be selected: Nuruddin, known as Nur Satgar, sent from Iran by the Isma'īlyā sect; Sayyad Jalāluddin from Bukhārā; Shaikh Jalāluddin from Tabriz and Sayyad 'Alī from Hamadān, Sayyad Sadruddin and Bābā 'Alī Qalandar were also missionaries from Iran. The history of

India often deals with the military glories and at the most eulogizes the administrative abilities or aesthetic tastes of Muslim rulers: sometimes it becomes a gruesome record of carnage wrought in the battlefields and of demolition of places of worship. This can be effectively counterbalanced by the creditable record of the peaceful activities of the Sufis, who gain far more abiding victories by presenting a faithful picture of Islam at its best, and winning all hearts through their single-minded devotion and their disinterested service to humanity. Thus Sufism, which was largely developed in Iran, and its resultant literature will be seen to have exerted a powerful influence on Indian society and culture.

## VIII

### *Architecture*

WE may now turn to architecture and examine the influence exerted in that sphere by Iran on India. A reference to Chapter II will convincingly show the influence of Achaemenian architecture on that of India during the Mauryan rule. This influence, in the opinion of Dr. J. J. Modi,<sup>117</sup> can also be traced on the Buddhist monuments and especially on the structures of Bāmyān in Afghanistan. But Iran has freely borrowed and lavishly bestowed on other nations the art-impulses it absorbed and developed by its own inherent genius. Iran had received its artistic impulse during Achaemenian times from Assyria, Babylonia, Egypt and Greece, while during the Sasanian regime Iran was influenced by Rome and Byzantium. It is hard to trace the origin of the dome, arch and the vault, though it is clear that their use was almost universal throughout Iran, which must have developed these features considerably and bequeathed them to the Muslims, when the latter

became masters of the country. The dome and arch, constituting the chief architectural glory of Baghdād and the Muslim world, were thus inherited by the Saracens through the Sasanians. The palace of Mashita, built by Khusru Parviz, was considered a gem of architecture, and in the opinion of J. Fergusson,<sup>118</sup> it is from the Mashita style that have "eventually blossomed the exquisitely elaborate forms of the Jaina and Saracenic style in India". Fergusson, who often emphasizes the alien influence on Indian art, further thinks that the great central arched doorways of some of the mosques of Gujarat, especially of Ahmedabad, had for their model the arched doorways of the Sasanian buildings of Khusru Parviz. In fact as Dr. Strykowski<sup>119</sup> neatly sums up: "What Hellas was to the art of antiquity, that Iran was to the art of the new Christian world and to that of Islam."

It has been admitted by writers on art that the pointed arch and spherical dome were the distinctive feature of Muslim architecture, derived from the Sasanians. But this need not create the impression that the arch and dome were known nowhere else in the world: for even in pre-Muslim India the pointed arch could be seen in the Hindu and Buddhist temple-niches, and the dome was also to be found in the Buddhist *stupas* or monuments containing ashes or relics of departed worthies. Thousands of such *stupas* were built by Ashoka, centuries before Islam was thought of. As Prof. K. T. Shah<sup>120</sup> observes, when the *stupa* was a solid hemispherical mass, the technique of dome-construction could not be noticed: but when images came to be placed under the head of the *stupa*, the dome had to be raised high and supported on columns. This shows that the Hindus were acquainted with the principles of dome-construction. This argument is perfectly sound, but it will be noticed that the dome for this reason does

not become the special feature of Hindu as it doubtless is of Muslim architecture. Nor do we find Hindu architecture at its best in the creation of domes, which are never so grand, imposing and attractive as they usually are in Muslim art.

Prof. Sa'îd Nafisi<sup>121</sup> observes that when the Arabs conquered Iran, they were ignorant of the art of building houses and even of clothing their persons in suitable raiment: nor could they claim in all Arabia more than seventeen persons who could read or write. According to Dr. A. U. Pope<sup>122</sup> the Arabs who conquered Iran knew nothing of house-building beyond the pitching of tents and raising of mud-cottages. Such was the Arab sense of appreciation of art and architecture that, as Ibn Khaldun<sup>123</sup> says, they met their need for stones to prop up their cooking-vessels by demolishing a building, and would secure pegs for their tents from the roof of a house! Ibn Khaldun remarks very plainly about the Arabs that as a result of their mode of living, their very presence was hostile to the existence of buildings which are the very foundation of civilization. After the conquest of Iran the Arabs indeed made considerable progress in architecture wherein they influenced other nations; but the credit is due not to the Arabs but to the artistic sense and aesthetic consciousness deeply embedded for centuries in the Iranians, who accepted or had to accept Islam after the Conquest.

Though the rule of the Khalifs in Sindh continued for 150 years till the close of the 10th century, they left only a few architectural relics reminiscent of their sway, and these few were poor in quality. In the 11th century, observes Sir J. Marshall,<sup>124</sup> Persia occupied an all-important place in the world of Islamic art. The genius of Persia was of the mimetic rather than of the creative order, but she had the magic gift of assimilating the artistic spirit of

other nations and refining them to suit her own standard of perfection. Centrally situated in the heart of the Middle East, Persia became the crucible in which the arts of ancient Assyria and China on the one hand and those of Syria, Rome and Byzantium on the other were fused together after the Arab conquest and transmuted into rich and attractive forms with the indelible stamp of Persian beauty set upon them. The channel by which this stream of art flowed southward into India, says Sir J. Marshall,<sup>125</sup> was Ghazni.<sup>126</sup> The Ghaznavides of the 10th and 11th centuries were heirs to the culture and magnificence of the Sāmāni dynasty of Iran. The iconoclast Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi repeatedly invaded India, and through these political and religious clashes Nature opened the door to artistic harmony. The Indians themselves had been endowed lavishly with the artistic spirit, and Muslim art (developed in Iran) now harmonized with the art of the Hindus, giving birth to a style which in strength and beauty, says Sir J. Marshall,<sup>127</sup> is unparalleled in the world.

For various reasons, the love of vast dimensions, characteristic of Zarathushtrian Iran, gradually wore away and was replaced by a taste for elegance and refinement. With the advent of Islam, says D. Barrett,<sup>128</sup> the Iranians gave up their natural bent for colossal art but turned to less sublime though more elegant and graceful models, and this was the architectural style introduced by the Muslims into India. The salient features of Muslim architecture were simplicity, the great dome, the pointed arch, the palace halls supported on pillars, the slender turrets at the corners, and the magnificent gate, built in the Indo-Saracenic style. The characteristics of Hindu architecture were variety and complexity of forms and decoration of every part with deep bas-reliefs and the perpetual human figure which is so repugnant to the religious sense of the Muslims. But art

can ignore the unpleasant and yet absorb from alien sources such forms of the sublime and the beautiful as it needs for its own development. A combination of the two schools of art—Hindu and Muslim—was inevitable, as could be observed, for instance, in the imposition of the Hindu *kalasha* (ornate lotus cresting) on the Muslim dome.<sup>129</sup> Indigenous Hindu art is largely seen in the architecture of Kashmir, Bengal and especially of Gujarat. As Havell<sup>130</sup> observes, the beautiful minarets of Gujarat have none of the Saracenic feeling of the Qutb Minār at Delhi, but are entirely Hindu in style, being adaptations of the splendid Rajput Towers of Victory at Chitor. Foreign Saracenic style is however often prominent in Jaumpur, Malwa and the Deccan.

The fusion of Hindu and Muslim architectural schools need cause no surprise, for such harmony is bound to appear even when the two races are sometimes radically opposed in religious beliefs, customs and general outlook of life. The very fact of co-existence and contiguity, sameness of environment, identity of interests and opportunities, resistance to the same calamities, whether man-made or God-sent etc. would inevitably draw the two races together in various walks of life. Besides, people may fight over material possessions, and yet they are mutually appreciative of their artistic and cultural treasures as seen in the political and literary history of Britain, France and Germany. In spite of the dissimilarities between Hindu and Muslim life we still find the emergence of a common language—the Urdu; the happy give and take of ideas and translation of great works in their literature, the artistic *rapprochement* in painting, music and various other forms of social life; and even the rise of a common faith as may be noticed in the assimilation of Hindu and Muslim elements in the faiths of Kabir and Nānak, in the eclecticism of Akbar and the liberal-minded tolerance of Dārā Shikuh.

One other reason for the inevitability of the fusion of Hindu and Muslim schools of architecture may be found in the fact that a Muslim king in India, for instance Ahmadshāh I of Gujarat, would naturally need Hindu workmen to build his mosques and monuments, and that should easily account for the presence of Hindu and Jaina elements in the Saracenic art of India. In the domain of architecture therefore a fusion between Hindu and Muslim schools was as unavoidable as it was advantageous to both parties. Doubtless India had her own art-traditions from remote antiquity, but now by Muslim contact a Hindu-Muslim art arose, celebrated for strength and grace, and, as Dr. A. U. Pope observes, Indian art became more definitely Indian, but did not lose its special individual character by being suppressed by Iranian art. A similar opinion is expressed by Prof. Humayun Kabir,<sup>11</sup> who observes: "Though influenced deeply by Persian tendencies, the palaces, forts and tombs of Northern India have their basis in the traditions of ancient India."

In Persia, 'Irāq and pre-Mughal India brick had been used as a building material from times innumerial, as wood was utilized in Kashmir because of its cheapness and easy availability from the neighbouring Himalayan mountain-forests. The double-dome originated perhaps in Syria and passed thence through 'Irāq to Persia and India. The defect of Persian architecture was that too much thought was given to surface decoration and too little to structural formative beauty. In fact the Persian architects were inclined to regard the fabric of a structure rather as a vehicle for ornament than as a thing of beauty in itself. Lavish display of ornament and richness of detail are to be found particularly in the architecture of the Khiljis in India (1290-1320); their successors the Taghlaqs (1320-1414) were more orthodox and austere and therefore less

extravagant. In Multan Gayāthuddin Taghlaq during his brief reign built in 1324 the famous tomb of Rukn i 'Ālam, considered by Sir J. Marshall<sup>132</sup> the best tomb ever built. It contains many Indian features, and yet the spirit underlying its design is largely Persian. His son and successor Muhammad Taghlaq embarked on the fantastic scheme of shifting the population of Delhi to Daulatābād: this and other hare-brained projects of this "mad monarch" depleted Delhi of its artists. His son Firuz Taghlaq was the greatest builder of his dynasty, and the ruins of his palace-fort, known as "Firuzshāh-Koīlā", can still be seen in Delhi. Firuz was however a fanatic persecutor of non-Muslims and consequently failed to secure the full co-operation of his Hindu subjects and achieve eminence by his architectural monuments.

Though the Mughals represent the Persianizing influence on Indian architecture at its highest and best, the pre-Mughal Persian effect was certainly not negligible. It is necessary here to survey the political condition of India before Babar stepped upon the scene and ushered in the golden age of architecture and the arts as of literature. In the 14th century the imperial power at Delhi was tottering. It had to face the numerous Muslim invasions of the Turks, Afghans and Tatars: it was further weakened by the rebellion and defection of Muslim governors within India; and the Hindu States were always ready to proclaim their independence from the alien yoke to which they were not conciliated till Akbar carried out his great ideal of India as a nation, one and undivided. Then in 1398 Taimur burst like a thunderstorm on the tottering Taghlaq power at Delhi and left behind him a name at which the Indian world grew pale for many a century. Taimur was himself a lover and patron of art but not when seized by the demon of destruction. He delivered a shattering blow



at the imperial power at Delhi, and art, finding little support at the centre, sought patronage in the various independent provinces that had already arisen or were rapidly rising after the volcanic eruption of Taimur.

Art fled in consequence to the South where the Bahmani kingdom had already arisen in 1347 and where out of its fragments the five Muslim States of the Deccan were to arise towards the end of the 15th century. Art also moved to the East to Bengal, which had in 1340 achieved its independence and maintained it till Akbar annexed the province to his empire in 1576. In Bengal architecture flourished as it had rarely done in pre-Mughal times. Art migrated to and was patronized by the Sharqi rulers of the new but short-lived kingdom of Jaunpur in Bihar, which asserted its independence in 1393 and became celebrated as a *noteworthy seat of learning and the centre of architectural eminence*. Art also shifted west to Gujarat, which had remained in a state of doubtful royalty but which soon after Taimur's invasion became independent of the central power under Zafarkhān (Sultan Muzaṣṣar I) in 1407. Within four years it consolidated its power with its capital at Ahmedabad, built by Ahmedshāh I, grandson of Muzaṣṣar I. Art passed on to Malwa, which also proclaimed its independence in 1401 under Dilāwarkhān Ghorī, whose son Hoshangshāh, celebrated as a great builder, transferred his capital to Mandu. Malwa retained its greatness as an independent Muslim State till it was annexed to the kingdom of Gujarat in 1531 by king Bahādurshāh.

The Indo-Muslim architecture of pre-Mughal times could best be seen therefore not in Delhi but in the *Jāmi' Masjid*s of Ahmedabad and Jaunpur and the palaces of Mandu. The *Jāmi' Masjid* of Ahmedabad, built by the founder of that city Ahmedshāh I, is raised on 260 graceful columns and is one of the most superb and imposing

of its class in the world. The tomb of Daryākhān, a nobleman of Ahmedabad, built in 1453, is permeated, according to Sir J. Marshall<sup>133</sup> with a strong Persian spirit: it has a lofty central dome and lower domed verandahs on its four sides. It is constructed throughout on the arcuate principle, which was destined to play an increasingly prominent part in Gujarat, where the arch was henceforth largely used. Mandu, the capital of Malwa, is the most magnificent of all the fortress-cities of India and owes its architectural greatness to its king Hoshangshāh. But great though these monuments were, they were soon to be thrown into the shade by the architectural glories of Delhi and Agra during the Mughal regime. The influence exercised by Delhi on the whole country was so great that no fort or capital could be built in South India without its northern gate being called "*Dehli Darwāzeh*" (Delhi gate).<sup>134</sup>

The Muslims were often in the habit of converting dilapidated Hindu temples into imposing mosques, sometimes appropriating the pillars and other parts of the old buildings to augment the charms of their own places of worship. In the opinion of H. Goetz,<sup>135</sup> the Qutb Minār of Delhi is the last monument of the Iranian Saljuq style. It was begun in 1199 by Muhammad Ghori, built by his viceroy Qutbuddin Aibak, the first of the Slave dynasty, whose name it bears, and completed by Iltutmish, the third and greatest king of the same dynasty in 1236: it underwent repairs in the reigns of 'Alāuddin Khilji, Firuzshāh Taghlaq and Sikandar Lodi. In building this tapering shaft an earlier Hindu temple was used with the mason's inscriptions, and the Minār has been claimed as a Hindu monument. The Masjid i Quwat al Islām, near the Qutb Minār, considered the first mosque in India, was also built on the ruins of the Hindu temple of Rai Pithora.

The Bahmani rule began in India from 1347, continued till 1489 and even lingered till 1525 when it disintegrated by reason of its discordant elements. In the beginning Bahmani architecture was almost exclusively based on that of Delhi. But the Bahmani Sultans were generous patrons of art and learning, and their courts soon became the centres of attraction for foreign artists, poets and scholars. But the most powerful foreign influence was exerted by Iran in the development of the civil architecture of the Bahmani dynasty. H. Goetz<sup>15</sup> observes that Bahmani art turned for inspiration to contemporary Iran and leaned so heavily on Iranian art that it might be considered the integral offshoot of Iran. The *Jāmi' Masjid* at Gulbarga<sup>17</sup> (1367) is Persian in spirit and the work of the Persian architect Rafi' Qazwini. The Chānd Minār at Daulatābād (1435), also constructed by Persian craftsmen, bears clear traces of the style and art of the builders. The Madressah (College) at Bidar, built in 1472 by order of Mahmud Gāwān, the great minister of the Bahmani kings and himself an Iranian, resembles the College of Ulugh Beg at Samarkand and is predominantly Persian in character. The Persianizing tendency in Bahmani architecture persisted though in a less degree under the successors of the Bahmanis—the 'Imād Shāhis of Berar, the Barid Shāhis of Bidar, the Qutb Shāhis of Golconda, but most prominently under the 'Adil Shāhis of Bijapur, whose rule was finally terminated by Aurangzebe in 1688. The Persian influence in art was very powerful at the initial stages, though it was but natural that indigenous Indian genius should dominate over the alien one in course of time.

Returning to the North, our attention is centred on the island-tomb of Sher Shāh Sur, the successful rival of Humāyun. It is an imposing structure (c. 1545) in the Indo-Persian style, built on a high plinth in the midst of

a lake at Sasarām in the Shāhābād district of Bihar. It however contains many Indian elements and was the work of a Punjabi architect 'Aliwākhān, who also built an admirable mosque named Qila' i Kuhana Masjid in the citadel of Sher Shāh. In the opinion of Percy Browne,<sup>138</sup> much of the character of the works carried out under Akbar and Jahangir may be traced to the genius of this master-builder 'Aliwākhān. Akbar's conciliatory policy with the Hindus in social and religious matters was also extended by him to the domain of art, and he always remained a true eclectic in matters religious and artistic. Though he adhered to Persian ideals, he introduced Hindu style of architecture in many of his buildings. This Hindu-Muslim architecture was often a fusion of Hindu trabeate and Iranian arcuate systems. Akbar preferred the Rajput style of architecture but even in his Red Palace in Agra Fort the Persian forms prevailed in the gateways, arches, vaults, facades, *mehrab*s (prayer-niches) and entrances, though the halls, *chhatris* (pillared kiosks) and domestic architecture are in Rajput style.

Unmistakable traces of Persian influence are observable in the famous tomb of Humāyun at Delhi (1564), similar in construction, as observed by V. Smith,<sup>139</sup> to the tombs of Taimur and Bibi Khānum at Samarqand. The dome is distinctly in imitation of the Timurid domes of Persia. The tomb however differs from the Persian in that it is built of marble and contains no coloured tiles. It was built by order of Humāyun's widow Hāji Begam by a Persian architect Mirak Mirzā Ghayāth. This tomb is the earliest example in India of a double dome with slightly swelling outline, standing on a high rock. This pleasing Persian form, says V. Smith,<sup>140</sup> far excels in beauty and effectiveness the low-pitched so-called "Pathan domes". The tomb of Khānkhānān (died 1627) with its central arched recess

and Timurid dome also indicates a return to the Persian style initiated in the tomb of Humāyūn. These two Persianized tombs—of Humāyūn and Khānkhānān—have merited the honour of having served as models of the Tāj Mahāl.

Fatehpur Sikri, built near Agra by Akbar as his capital, is a blend of Hindu and Muslim architectural conceptions. The building of Fatehpur Sikri was, says V. Smith,<sup>141</sup> the freak of an irresponsible autocrat, an act of inspired folly. It was begun and finished at lightning speed so long as Akbar's capricious mood lasted. The world was ransacked to supply craftsmen and artists of every kind. Nothing like Fatehpur Sikri ever was created before or can be created again. Among the noteworthy buildings it contains is the tomb of Akbar's spiritual preceptor Shaikh Salim Chishti, with its canopy of mother-of-pearl and ebony inlay, built in an unmistakable Hindu style. The magnificent Buland Darwāzeh at Fatehpur Sikri is a triumphal archway to commemorate Akbar's conquest of Gujarat. In immensity it stands unrivalled by any other gateway in India. The gateways, arches and vaults of Fatehpur Sikri distinctly reveal Persian influence. Unfortunately not many buildings of Akbar's times have managed to survive, because Shah Jahan cleared away nearly all his grandfather's buildings in Agra Fort to replace them by others designed in accordance with his own taste. But then Akbar fared as he deserved, for he had followed the same policy with regard to the buildings of his predecessors.

The Mughal regime proved to be the golden age of art and architecture as of literature and culture, and the Hindus, though in the main faithful to their own art-traditions, could not help imitating in their palaces the *Diwān i Khās*, *Diwān i 'Ām*, *Shish Mahāl* and the *Bārādari* of the Muslim rulers. The resultant architecture, says Sardar K.

M. Panikkar,<sup>142</sup> differed both from the earlier Hindu mansions and from the Mughal palaces, as may be seen from the great palace of Bir Singh Bundelā, the old fort at Bikaner and the palaces at Udaipur, Jodhpur and Amber.

The Sultans of the Deccan, like their Balmani predecessors, proved to be mighty builders and could challenge the glories of Mughal architecture in some of their works, especially those at Bijapur. The Ibrāhīm Rauza or the tomb of Sultan Ibrāhīm II of Bijapur was said to have been built in 1627 by the Persian architect Malek Sandal. Bijapur can also boast of the Palace of Relics, enshrining two hairs of the Prophet Muhammad. But the colossal architectural work that has immortalized the name of Bijapur in the domain of art is the Gol Gumbaz, the tomb of Mumammad 'Adil Shāh, built in 1656. Though based on the huge mosques of Istanbul, it is a model of Hindu-Persian art. It is particularly celebrated for its mighty dome with a diameter of 124 feet, only 15 feet less than that of St. Peter's at Rome. The Gol Gumbaz in the gloom of eventide looks more like a beetling crag than a man-made edifice. It is constructed of brick and lavish proportion of very thick mortar, so much so that, as Percy Brown<sup>143</sup> observes, the dome may be described as consisting of a hollow mass of concrete, reinforced with layers of brick set in level courses. This mode of construction is probably derived from Ottoman sources. Another gem of architectural excellence in South India is the Mihtar Mahāl (c. 1620), small in size, but famous for its beauty and decoration.

The Persians used to build almost entirely in brick with decorations and glaze, whereas the Mughals were inclined to the use of stone and marble. In Sindh also Persian influence prevailed from early times with the result that buildings were raised of brick and sandstone decorated

with brilliant schemes of glazed style in the approved Persian manner, as in the great *Jāmi' Masjid* (1644) of Shah Jahan at Tatta, the capital of Lower Sindh. Lahore, being situated in an alluvial plain, made use of bricks and glazed tiles, produced in the kilns of Kāshān in Iran. The artists of Lahore fell under Persian influence and revelled in a brilliant display of gorgeously coloured patterns in faience, and even sacrificed conventional skill to tile-decoration, known in Persian as *Kāshikāri* from the city of Kāshān, where this work was executed with rare skill. The buildings in Lahore are therefore more Persian than Mughal in character, and according to Percy Brown,<sup>144</sup> include even suggestions of Mittraic symbolism. The finest of these Lahore buildings are the *Masjid* of Wazirkhān (1634) and the tomb of the famous Persian architect 'Alī Mardānkhān.

Few monarchs of the world can ever approach Shah Jahan in the sublimity of his conceptions, the beauty of his designs, the refinement of his tastes and the lavish magnificence he displayed in the execution of his immortal edifices. As Percy Browne<sup>145</sup> remarks, Augustus's claim that he found Rome of brick and left it of marble has its counterpart in the building production of Shah Jahan, who found the Mughal cities of sandstone and left them of marble. The emperor had ample facilities to indulge in his favourite pursuit, for the quarries of Makrānā in Rajputana provided unlimited supplies of marble. Again, it was in the reign of Shah Jahan that the Indo-Persian style of architecture attained the acme of its excellence. The superb Tāj Mahāl in Agra, the lovely Moti Masjid in Agra Fort, the great *Jāmi' Masjid* and the imposing Red Fort of Delhi will for ever remain ideals of their type and serve as centres of pilgrimage for art connoisseurs all over the world. Shah Jahan's *Jāmi' Masjid* at Delhi is the largest and

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most eminent throughout India: his *Jāmi' Masjid* at Agra, though splendid, is not constructed on such a titanic scale. For about 75 years during the reigns of Akbar and Jahangir, Agra had practically wrested from Delhi the capitalship of the Mughal empire: it is to the munificence of Shah Jahan that Delhi owes its resuscitated artistic grandeur. "*Si monumentum requiris, circumspice*" (if you seek his monument, look around). This epitaph is carved on a tablet over the doorway in St. Paul's Cathedral where Sir Christopher Wren is buried, and it significantly sums up the achievement of the famous architect who rebuilt London after the Great Fire of 1666: and, indeed, one has to pass through Delhi with one's eyes open to see how lavishly and on a right royal scale the Mughal emperor has raised his own monument by adorning his favourite city, which in his days bore after him the proud name of *Shāhjahānābād*. Yet, strange to say, Shah Jahan's architectural gem of purest ray serene, the cynosure of beauty-lovers all over the world, is to be found not in Delhi but on the banks of the Jumna at Agra.

The *Tāj Mahāl* is the love-monument raised by Shah Jahan over the remains of his queen Arjumand Bānu, better known as Mumtāz Mahāl, the daughter of *Āsafkhān*, the brother of Nur Jahan. It may be admitted that from a communist point of view the creation of the *Tāj Mahāl* must be denounced as a criminal waste of public funds for the fulfilment of a purely personal end: but from the artistic viewpoint it is a masterpiece of architecture which humanity would be proud to possess and which even the gods might be inclined to envy. The *Tāj Mahāl* is a dream in marble, a poem in stone, a miracle of symmetry, stately and yet beautiful in the midst of its romantic surroundings. On seeing this milk-white edifice in the soft, silvery light of the harvest-moon by Jumna's banks, far famed in song

and legend, the beholder forgets that he is in the presence of an earthly object, and lingers long in this fairyland, only wishing that this blessed moment were stretched out to eternity. The praise of the Tāj Mahāl is on every lip, its model in every house, its picture in every schoolboy's book. In popularity the Tāj Mahāl, "designed by Titans and finished by jewellers", remains unsurpassed by the mightiest or loveliest building in the world. It is magnificent in conception, faultless in design, immaculate in workmanship. Its loveliness can be adequately described only in the raptures of poetry, but a fair idea of its vast dimensions can be formed from the fact that a township, named Mumtāzābād, had specially to be built in the vicinity for the habitation of thousands of artisans, employed in its construction. According to Tavernier (1605-1689), the French traveller and jeweller, the Tāj Mahāl provided work for 20,000 men for 22 years. The township, founded to accomodate its builders, is still to be found and bears the modern name of Tājganj.

According to Sir Edwin Arnold,<sup>146</sup> the plinth of the Tāj is over one hundred yards each way, and it lifts its golden pinnacle 244 feet in the sky. From a distance, says the same author, this lovely and aerial dome sits therefore above the horizon like a rounded cloud. If ever a lovely woman, ravishing in her grace and rapturous in her beauty, were, by the flourish of some wizard's wand, to assume the form of a monument and yet preserve her pristine feminine charms, that miracle in marble must be the Tāj Mahāl. As E. B. Havell<sup>147</sup> very appropriately observes: "It (the Tāj Mahāl) is India's noble tribute to the grace of Indian womanhood. . .the Venus de Milo of the East." For minutes together the onlooker stands dumb and motionless like the monument before him, lost in admiration, transported in thought to some archetypal world of

artistic perfection in some fairy land forlorn. The Buland Darwāzeh is a symbol of sublimity, the Moti Masjid of beauty, the Tāj Mahāl of both. The Tāj Mahāl, which has made Agra the tourists' paradise, is *facile princeps* among the buildings of the world, and remains India's noblest and greatest contribution to the realm of art.

No efforts were spared in securing the services of specialists in every department for the construction of this memorable edifice. Several of these craftsmen were Indian: many were recruited from Persia; some came from Turkey, and and an artist or two even from Italy. Percy Brown<sup>148</sup> gives a list of some of the Persian artists who worked as if they built for eternity. A calligrapher was invited from Baghdād, and one Amānatkhān from Shirāz to ensure that all the Tughrā inscriptions were corrected, carved and inlaid; a flower-carver arrived from Bukhārā; an expert in dome-construction, Isma'īlkhān Rumi, judging from his name, must have hailed from Constantinople; a pinnacle-maker from Samarcand and a master-mason of Qandahār also offered their services to the building of this marvel, which, though constructed by human hands, is invested with the halo of the Arabian Nights. But there is substantial agreement among writers that the chief master-builder, who co-ordinated the entire work was a Persian, Ustād 'Isā Shirāzi, assisted by his son Muhammad Shirāzi. V. A. Smith and Father Heras held that the Venetian Geronimo Veroneo was the chief architect of the Tāj: but this theory has been refuted by Sir J. Marshall, E. B. Havell and Dr. A. U. Pope.<sup>149</sup> The Venetian may have submitted his design, but, judging from the appearance of the monument itself, it seems to have been clearly designed by an Asiatic architect. The *pietra dura* or inlaid decoration is probably the work of Indian craftsmen. The design of the Tāj Mahāl is based on the tomb of Khānkhānān,

which was itself a modified copy of the famous tomb of Humāyun, both in Delhi, and both, as observed previously, models of Persian art.

On the opposite side of the river Jumna, at the place now occupied by the Mehtāb Bāgh, Shah Jahan had planned his own tomb, a replica of the Tāj, but in black marble, the two monuments to be connected by a bridge. But the fratricidal war which followed interrupted his plans, and Aurangzebe, who had done his utmost to break his father's heart during his life-time could not be expected to fulfil his wishes after his death. The plan was therefore abandoned: had it been carried out, it would have been "an architectural composition which for romance, imagination and magnificence would have had no equal".

Iran itself had passed through a similar noteworthy period of building activity under her king Shāh 'Abbās Safawī, considered the greatest Muslim monarch of Iran after Hārūn al rashid. Shāh 'Abbās was a mighty builder and augmented the magnificence and grandeur of his capital Isphahān by a series of gorgeous edifices. Shāh 'Abbās died in 1636: Mumtāz Mahāl had departed from this world in 1629. In compliance with her dying wishes her husband, frantic with grief, had promised to raise on her remains a monument, befitting their exalted rank and typifying the intensity of their love. The Tāj Mahāl was started in 1631 and was completed in 1653. Thus by an extremely happy coincidence the art-traditions, built up in the first half of the 17th century in the reign of the great Shāh 'Abbās Safawī, came in good time and proved to be of immense value to Iranian architects when they applied their genius to the building of the Tāj Mahāl. The Iranian influence on the Tāj is particularly noticeable in plastering and in *kāshikāri* or mosaic work in which the artists of Kāshān in Iran had specialized themselves.<sup>120</sup>

H. Goetz<sup>11</sup> believes in the Iranian influence and holds that the Tāj Mahāl is Safawi art, and though in his opinion the two chief builders were Indian Muslims, he observes that they were of Persian origin. Their names according to Goetz were Nādir al 'asr Ustād Ahmad Ma'imār Lāhori (the prodigy of the age, the master-builder Ahmad of Lahore) and his brother Ustād Hamid Lāhori. The hall and gateways of the Tāj Mahāl are in Persian style, and Goetz wonders that this great monument, which is least characteristic of Mughal art, should have come to be regarded the classic representative and emblem of Mughal civilization. To banish all doubt on the subject, one more authority may be cited—the French savant M. Grousset,<sup>12</sup> who trenchantly observes that the Tāj Mahāl is "the soul of Iran incarnate in the body of India". The Tāj Mahāl is thus a monument wherein once again and, it is to be hoped, for many centuries to come, Iran and India join hands, this time in the realm of art and beauty.

As observed previously, early Muslim architecture in Iran was severe and unornamented, though the religious zeal of the builders was gradually being softened by their innate love of beauty and elegance. This love of beauty was displayed by the Muslims in their palaces, mausoleums and other secular places rather than in their mosques, which, in conformity with the spirit of their religion, were often allowed to remain in unadorned majesty. We have also noticed that the severity of Muslim architecture in India had begun to yield to ornamentation for the apparent reason that Hindu craftsmen, with their traditional sense of profuse embellishment, were now co-operating with the Indian Muslims, who were often themselves converts from Hinduism but who had found it impossible to forsake the artistic legacy which they had inherited from their Hindu ancestors. The love of beauty and elegance flowered in all

its charm during the Mughal regime, and through ornamentation, arabesque carving, inlay work and mosaic pattern culminated in the works of Shah Jahan. Tennyson in one of his happiest efforts sums up the classical art of Virgil in the line: "All the charm of all the Muses often flowering in 'a lonely word:'" so too the united splendour of Hindu and Muslim art effloresced at last in one superb, magnificent edifice, the Tāj Mahāl, unapproached so far in its beauty and its majesty. In view of this element of loveliness and sensuousness, apparent in the buildings of Shah Jahan, critics have designated the style of his edifices as the lyric and that of the times of Akbar and his predecessors as the epic style of Indian architecture.<sup>33</sup> We have already noted the substantial contribution of the Iranian art of the spacious days of Shāh 'Abbās the great to the glorious achievements of Shah Jahan in the realm of architecture.

In the times of Aurangzeb architecture declined, for after an age of feverish productivity and artistic excellence a period of sterility was inevitable. The chief architectural relic of Aurangzeb's regime was the mausoleum raised on the remains of his Iranian queen Dilārā Bānu by the architect 'Atāullāh in 1679 and popularly known as "Bibi kā maqbara". It is a frank imitation of the Tāj Mahāl but considerably poorer than the original in every respect.

Sculpture is closely associated with architecture, and goes hand in hand with painting, for the one in stone and the other in colour represent nature almost throbbing with life and vibrant with activity. Sculpture in India is at least as old as the commencement of idolatry in Hinduism, and Indian sculptors have always delighted in depicting the figures of their deities rather than those of kings and courtiers, for art to the Indian mind was a form of devotion than a mode of recreation or a pursuit of beauty.

But Islam has always uncompromisingly frowned on the portrayal of the human figure, especially in stone, and no mercy could be expected from Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni and his successors, even including the artistically-minded Mughals, on Indian sculpture. Contemptuous indifference to sculpture would be the utmost limit of kindness for which Hindus would be thankful to their Muslim rulers, however tolerant they might be in other respects. In these circumstances the influence of the Muslims on Hindu sculpture and *vice-versa* must be considered as entirely out of the question.

## IX

### *Painting*

We may now proceed to painting which is far less durable than architecture or sculpture and unlikely to survive the tyranny of time and the ravages of man. So far as Iran is concerned we are consequently left not with pictures but with inferences that the pictorial art must have prospered in Sasanian times.

Painting had indeed been well developed in that age and skill was displayed in the blending of colours. Māni, the religious reformer of the 3rd century A.D., referred to previously, was an eminent artist. Finding his religious views unacceptable in Iran, he started on his travels and passed on to China, celebrated for its proficiency in the pictorial art. Māni was much influenced by his sojourn in China where he drew excellent pictures, known as the Arzhang, and on his return to Iran he produced them as a proof of divine revelation. His picture-gallery was famous in Iran by the name of Nigāristān ī Cheen. Māni was also conversant with the art of decorating books with gold and silver colours. According to Dr. Pope,<sup>124</sup> when Māni



was treated as a heretic and when his volumes were consigned to the fire, currents of golden water began to issue from his books. Traces of mural paintings of Sasanian times have also been discovered; for instance, in the royal palace at the Sasanian capital, Ctesiphon, there was a fresco representing the capture by king Naushirwān of the important Syrian city of Antioch from the Romans in 540.<sup>155</sup> The Iranians also painted pictures of king Behrām-gur and his beloved Bānu Āzdeh, hunting on horseback. According to the historian Mas'udi, there was a custom in Iran that before the death of a king his portrait was painted and put up in the royal palace, and Mas'udi thinks that the pictorial art had made considerable progress in the Sasanian age. One can arrive at the same conclusion on observing Iranian proficiency in calligraphy, in the ceramic art and in the beautiful pictures with which their vessels were covered over, as well as from the excellent designs woven in their famous carpets. But few if any traces of Iranian painting could be expected to survive the terrible vicissitudes to which Iran was subjected for centuries. It is possible, says Ghirshman,<sup>157</sup> that the frescoes in the Buddhist sanctuaries of Central Asia were influenced by Sasanian paintings; but it was Muslim Iran that must be considered the direct heir of Sasanian art.

Barbarian nations, like the Goths of the West and the Mongols of the East, were at one time of their career so blind in the fury of their Vandalism as to demolish indiscriminately libraries and academies, mosques and churches, temples and towers; but their blindness was not incurable, for once they were in power they displayed a sense of art and beauty and appreciation of scholarship, which were never expected from people whose adamant hearts had remained totally unresponsive to the sight of tears and tribulation. The Mongols, who were a byword for heartless

brutality and who, like the modern nuclear weapons, ruthlessly destroyed whole populations inclusive of women and children, usually spared the lives of the artists. Taimur deluged North India with blood, but, like his predecessor Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi, carried away with him some of the most skilled architects to build for him the great mosque in his capital, Samarqand. As Alexander (though destined in his drunken fit to be the future demolisher of Iran's libraries) destroyed Thebes but spared the ancient house of its famous poet Pindar; and as the Spartans, despised as uncultured boors, forbore from destroying Athens to do honour to the great Attic tragedian Euripides; so too had Taimur a soft corner in his savage heart for art and artists, and thus became in his numerous campaigns the unconscious diffuser of Iranian culture, as his predecessor Changizkhān, an even greater scourge of the world, was, by the roads opened up by his conquests, an unwitting promoter of commercial intercourse and disseminator of learning.<sup>158</sup>

Taimur's grandson Bāisangarkhān was a famous aesthete and in the 15th century founded an art-academy at Herāt. In the concluding years of the same century there flourished Behzād (died 1526), the greatest of Iranian painters after Māni, in the reign of the famous patron of arts Sultan Husain Bāiqarā, the last of the Timurid monarchs. Behzād represents in himself the exquisite blending of the Persian and Chinese schools, and in the earliest Muslim paintings to reach India, for instance from Khorāsān and Bukhārā, the Chinese influence could be traced.<sup>159</sup> This Chinese influence in painting reached India not directly from China but through Iran, which during the Ilkhāni regime was particularly susceptible to its charms.<sup>160</sup> Behzād's disciple Āgā Mirak Isphahāni painted the famous picture of the "Ma'arāj" in which the Prophet Muhammad on his

horse Burāq is depicted ascending bodily into the Divine Presence. This shows that the Muslim aversion to the portrayal of human figures was gradually dying out in Iran.

But it is now worth while to turn to the state of pictorial art in India in order to determine how it profited under the Mughals, the artistic inheritors of Iranian culture. The greatness of a country is more a spiritual than a material quality and can be truly judged by its proficiency in literature and art than by its conquests and empire-building. India never cherished territorial ambitions beyond its own geographical limits; its aspirations were central rather in the domain of the mind and the spirit. Like other features of Indian cultural life painting also can be traced to the Vedas, for it seems to have originated in pictures of the Vedic deities and symbolical representation of the Vedic ritual. Painting was regarded in the "Kāmasutra" of Vātsyāyana as one of the 64 traditional *kalās* or arts of the accomplished Hindu lady or gentleman. Yashodhar in his commentary on the *Kāmasutra* mentions the *ṣaḍāṅgas* or six limbs of painting,<sup>161</sup> and his detailed discussion of its technique shows that the art was thoroughly well known and cultivated at that time in India.

The popularity of painting can be judged from the multiplicity of references to it in the two great Hindu epics as well as in Sanskrit drama and fiction where we often read about mural paintings and *Chitrashālās* (picture-galleries) in royal palaces and aristocratic mansions, though little, if anything, has survived at the present day. Even secular painting was in vogue in India, where it was favoured alike by royalty and commonalty. The main centres of painting were Ajanta and Ellora near Aurangabad, Bādāmi in Bijapur District, Bāgh in Gwalior State, Sittanavasal, Kāñchipuram and Tīrumalaipuram in South India and Sigiriya in Ceylon. The same national characteristics

are revealed by artists in stone or on canvas even through the course of ages — on the Takht i Jamshid or in the paintings of Behzād, in the Gupta sculptures or the Ajanta frescoes.

But there is a great difference between the art-traditions of Iran and India. Iranian art has attracted the notice of connoisseurs by its clarity, accuracy, love of design and fondness for colour. But Indian art from ancient times has dwelt more on the *bhāva* (sentiment, emotion) than on the technique, and has often been symbolical with a deep undercurrent of spiritual significance, which would need a Havell to appreciate and a Coomarswami to interpret. Hindu painting was idealistic and largely religious: Muslim painting, being itself a departure from the strict Qur'anic injunctions, had to be secular and realistic. The Muslims had no deities to depict, no mythological figures to portray, but they took delight in painting court-scenes and the gorgeous panorama of Nature. In the opinion of L. B. Havell<sup>162</sup> in pre-Muslim India painting did flourish among Hindus and Buddhists, but there was hardly any seriousness about it, and the paintings represented figures of deities and characters from the *Purāṇas* and from the life of Buddha. The Indians were by no means devoid of the artistic sense as the paintings in the caves of Ajanta, extending from about 300 B.C. to about A.D. 700, would amply testify.

But with the arrival of the Muslims, to whom the depiction of the human figure was anathema, painting was discouraged and even banned, as an activity abhorrent to the Prophet Muhammad, who, according to a tradition preserved by Bukhārī and noted by Prof. Hitti,<sup>163</sup> once happened to have remarked that the persons to be punished most severely on the day of judgment would be the painters. The excellence achieved by the Muslims in the pictorial art was thus not because but in spite of their

religious injunctions. In India there seems to have been a systematic campaign of demolition of Indian pictures with the result that no art-galleries of ancient royal palaces have survived: the Ajanta frescoes escaped the general fate for they happened to be far away in the mountains. In the 14th century the bigoted king Firuzshāh Taghlaq had prohibited the painting of portraits and wall-decoration in his palaces. For more than 500 years after the Muslim conquest of India the painter was neglected and despised. In the opinion of V. Smith,<sup>14</sup> Indian paintings, executed during the long period of nine centuries between the latest paintings at Ajanta and the earliest at Fatehpur Sikri, have perished almost without exception, and, but for Abul Fazl's express testimony, the continued existence of Hindu schools of painting throughout the ages would have been a matter of faith and inference rather than of positive certainty. From this decadent stage Indian painting was revived in the regime of the Mughals, who, as we have seen, derived their art-inspiration from the Iranian masters. Thus it was the Muslims who destroyed and the Muslims again, or rather the Mughals, who reawakened the pictorial art which was once a highly valued branch of ancient Indian culture.

Goetz,<sup>15</sup> who traces the influence of Iranian painting on Indian art, holds that Indian painting followed the Baghdād school of the 13th century, and Hindu art was adapted to Muslim purposes and ideals. The same Baghdād school influenced the Ahmedabad painters who were nevertheless faithful to the indigenous Hindu and Jaina traditions. The Bahmani paintings were so much dominated by the style of the Ilkhānid and early Timurid period as to be mistaken for models of genuine Persian style. In fact Hindu and Muslim styles in painting had become so blended in course of time that it was difficult, if not impossible, to say whether a certain picture was by a Hindu or a Muslim

artist. In the opinion of Goetz,<sup>166</sup> the style of the times of Shāh 'Abbās Safāwi (early 17th century) dominated Bijapur painting of South India, till it was ousted by the Mughal style of the times of Jahangir and Shah Jahan. It will thus be seen that Hindu painting, which had fallen on evil days, was revived under Mughal patronage. But this happy result was not an unexpected miracle, but the result of inherent talent which continued latent in the nation for centuries, awaiting the advent of favourable circumstances for its resurrection.

Ever since the start of the Mughal rule in India art began to be secularized, and a special school of painting now made its appearance. Havell<sup>167</sup> clearly says that the origin of this Indian painting could be traced to Iranian influence. He compares this influence to that of Italy on all Europe during the Renaissance. *Though doubtless Persian in origin, Mughal painting still remains the joint product of Persian and Hindu ideas.* The Mughal school, says P. Brown,<sup>168</sup> confined itself to portraying the somewhat materialistic life of the court, with its state functions, processions, hunting expeditions and all the picturesque though barbaric pageantry of an affluent Oriental dynasty: while the Hindu artists "living mentally and bodily in another and more abstract environment, and working for Hindu patrons, pictured scenes from the Indian classics, domestic subjects and illustrations from the life and thought of their motherland and its creed." Though the Hindu style was thus different from the Mughal in temper, sentiment and motive, the two flourished together and were generously patronized by the Mughal rulers, till their constant assimilation led to the rise of the Mughal school of painting, represented in some of the best museums of East and West.

Some Iranian painters, themselves under the fresh inspiration of the great Behzād, the Raphael of the East,

accompanied Babar to India, where painting rapidly began to develop. Babar was a keen, observant and enthusiastic admirer of Nature, and thoroughly alive to the charms of flower and leaf in gardens and grottos. As Stanley Lane Poole<sup>169</sup> observes:— "Dissipation never dulled his appreciation of such delights or his pleasure 'in poetry and music.'" But his reign in India was too short to permit him to establish a school of painting in this country. His son Humāyun was in this as in many other ways a chip of the old block. During his long exile in Persia he took the opportunity of acquainting himself with the music, poetry and painting of the country. He came into contact at Tabriz with Mir Sayyad 'Alī Tabrizī, the pupil of Behzād, and Khwāja 'Abd us Samd Shirāzi, known as *Shrin Qalam* (sweet pen), both of whom accompanied him to India, where they became tutors in painting to the emperor and his son Akbar. Both artists prepared for Humāyun the richly illustrated copy of the *Dāstān i Amir Hamza* (episode of Amir Hamza). Both these Iranian masters deserve the credit of being founders of the Mughal school of painting. In the 16th century there also flourished the painter Sultan Muhammad and his son Ustād Muhammadī. In the reign of Shāh 'Abbās Safawī there flourished the famous painter Rezā 'Abbāsī, regarded as a rival of Behzād. Another painter from Iran, associated with Humāyun, was Shāhpur Khorāsānī. Thus the founders of the Mughal school of painting were predominantly Persians, who formed the nucleus of a school which Humāyun founded but which that genuine aesthete, dying within six months of his return to India, was not destined to carry out to perfection.

Akbar also was a sincere lover of painting: he founded and endowed a State school of art,<sup>170</sup> which worked under his own personal direction and did great work under the enthusiastic patronage of Jahangir. Akbar evinced his love

for Iranian art by inviting several Persian painters to his capital. There were more than a hundred painters in his court, and they were assigned the task of illustrating works like the *Changiznāmeḥ*, *Zafarnāmeḥ*, *Razm-nāmeḥ*, *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Nāl Daman* etc. But the Hindus now took full advantage of Akbar's liberal policy, and the majority of painters at his court were Hindus. Of the 17 famous artists of Akbar's reign no less than 13 were Hindus, like Basawan, Lāl, Daswanth, Kesu, Mukund, Haribans and others. The art-connection with Persia continued, for special kinds of paper, pigments and brushes, little known in India, had to be imported from Persia. A historical instance may here be quoted in proof of Akbar's fascination for painting.<sup>171</sup> During his lightning-like march on horse-back from Agra to Ahmedabad, covering 550 miles in 9 days in rainy weather, Akbar's personal party comprised 27 persons of whom 15 were Hindus: it is interesting to note that three of them were painters, which shows that the emperor could not afford to forget the pleasures of art even when engaged in his most urgent military operations.

Jahangir was a great dilettante in the pictorial art, and his love for pictures, his taste in judging their merits and his encouragement of artists are revealed in many a passage in his *Memoirs*. He records in that work that if one portrait was finished by several painters, he was able to ascertain the names of those who had drawn the different portions of that single picture: nay, he could even determine without fail who drew the brow and who the eye-lashes, or whether anyone had touched up the portrait after it was drawn by the first painter. The patronage bestowed on painters reached its climax under Jahangir, and Hindus and Muslims vied with one another in producing artistic works which represent the high-water mark gained in the pictorial art in Mughal times. Among the Persian painters,



patronized by this royal connoisseur, we find the name of Āqā Reżā of Herāt, who won the title of *Ā'edir az zamān* (the prodigy of the times) and his son Abul Hasan; Muhammad Nādir and Muhammad Murād, both of Samargand; and Ustād Mansur, the celebrated painter of animal life, who was honoured with the distinction of "Nādir ul 'asr" (the rare one of the age). According to Prof. Shustari,<sup>172</sup> miniature painting was started in Central Asia, but developed in Iran. This art was not unknown in India though it had been repressed so far by Muslim bigotry. It was now revived by Akbar under Persian influence and consummated in the reign of Jahangir.

Shah Jahan's tastes lay in the direction of architecture where this nonpareil reigned supreme. He had not the keen appreciation of pictures that his father had, and he gradually reduced the number of court-painters. It must be remembered that in an autocratic State the prosperity or decline of an art depends considerably if not exclusively on the personal taste or whim of the monarch himself. Dārā Shikuh was much interested in painting and was a patron of that art, but this magnanimous though ill-fated prince was not destined to succeed his father to the throne. By this time the purely Persian elements in the Mughal school of painting grew fainter day by day, and gradually the Mughal school emancipated itself from the tutelage of Persia by developing certain distinctive characteristics of its own. With the accession of Aurangzebe to the throne painting was definitely doomed, for he was certainly the last man in the world to encourage an activity, however innocent or pleasant, which in his opinion was incompatible with the precepts of the religion he professed. Aurangzebe is said to have destroyed some pictures with his own hands, and Manucci<sup>173</sup> records that by his express orders the figures in Akbar's tomb at Secundrābād were covered with

a coat of whitewash. The painters soon dispersed and renouncing the puritanical court migrated from the capital to other centres like Haiderābād, Oudh, Patna, Mysore or wherever else they expected their talents to be suitably rewarded. Strange to say, however, Aurangzebe's culture and self-esteem got the better of his Puritanism, and he is said to have delighted in the pictorial records of his own achievements. But he sought to discriminate invidiously between Muslim and non-Muslim artists, and thus sowed the seeds of decline of the fine arts as he helped, by the same blind, insensate policy, to precipitate the downfall of the imperial House of Babar in India.<sup>174</sup>

## X

### *Calligraphy*

THE Persians have an inborn love for the elegant art of calligraphy, the sister-art of painting, by which books are written in extremely attractive, fascinating and ornamental handwriting. It became an art in itself and a master-calligrapher might sometimes hope to win as great a reward for his art as an eminent painter might for his painting. After the advent of Islam the portrayal of human figures on stone or canvas was denounced. But there has neither been nor will be a country without some form of art, and if one outlet in one direction be closed for some reason, another outlet elsewhere is bound to open for the artistic expression of the country. It was thus natural and even inevitable for Muslim Iran to turn to calligraphy for the manifestation of its love of fine arts. The Kufic script (from the town of Kufeh in 'Irāq) was developed as an ornamental motif not only for the adornment of books but also for that of pots, textiles, buildings etc. and all this was mainly done by Persian craftsmen. According to Prof.

Shustari,<sup>175</sup> Iran may be called the cradle of calligraphy, and the number of calligraphers there is so great that a complete list can hardly be attempted. Many Muslim princes of Iran were skilled calligraphers, for instance, the famous patron of arts Bāisanqar Mirzā, the grandson of Taimur, and calligraphy flourished most in Iran during the Mongol rule. The Qorān began to be written in beautiful Kufic style, illuminated in liquid gold. To the 14th century belongs what is known as the *Derioteh Shāhnāmeh*, which remains unexcelled in the beauty of its illustrations. To the 15th century belongs the *Teherān Shāhnāmeh*, representing the high-water mark in book-making, as prepared by Ja'far Bāisanqari, the greatest Iranian calligrapher of the age.

This ornamental art was unknown in India which was very considerably, if not exclusively, influenced by the calligraphy of Iran. Not much of calligraphy, however, could be gathered in India in the reigns of Bābar and Humāyun, though mention must be made of the Persian calligrapher Mir 'Alī of Herāt (died 1558), the specimens of whose art are still to be seen in the Indian Museum of Calcutta.<sup>176</sup> Abul Fazl refers to seven modes of calligraphy being in vogue in the reign of Akbar, a liberal patron of this art as of all others. These styles of writing are distinguished one from the other chiefly by the proportion of curved to straight lines. In the Kufic style the straight lines were five-sevenths of the whole, whereas in the Nasta'liq (a combination of Naskh and Ta'liq), which Akbar preferred, all the lines were curved.<sup>177</sup> Khwāja 'Abdus Samd Shirāzi, the Persian friend of Humāyun and the founder of the Indo-Persian school of pictorial art, had such keenness of eye and cunning of hand that he is said to have performed the miracle of writing on a poppy-seed the four-verse but highly venerated 112th chapter of the

Qorān. The greatest calligrapher of the age was an Indian, Muhammad Husain of Kashmir, a master of the Nasta'liq mode of writing, on whom was conferred the title of "*Zarrin Qalam*" or golden pen. Jahangir, Shah Jahan and even Aurangzebe were keenly interested in and munificent patrons of this art. Aurangzebe was a sworn enemy of painting and music but he did not find calligraphy offensive to his religious sensibilities. He was himself a skilful calligrapher and, as is well known, defrayed a portion of his personal expenses through the sale of copies of the *Qorān* transcribed by himself. The illumination of manuscripts thus flourished in India and that too to such an extent that it was imitated in Hindi and Sanskrit works, and became famous even in Europe.<sup>178</sup> But to-day calligraphy is a dying art, almost superseded by printing and typewriting, but while the charms of calligraphy are æsthetic, the value of printing is wholly utilitarian. Calligraphy has had its day once both in North and South India, and its best specimens can now be found only in museums and exhibitions.

The religious ban against the portrayal of human figures also resulted in the flowering of the Iranian genius in the creation of various ornamental and fanciful designs, known from the Arabs as *arabesque*. This species of ornamentation for flat surfaces often consisted of fantastic figures in colour or low relief with intertwining of leaves and floral forms. Calligraphy and arabesque began to be imitated in India from the very beginning, and numerous volumes in the collections of royal and aristocratic families will be found to be excellent samples of these arts, which were patronized by the wealthy and which reached their acme during the Mughal regime.

From the times of Akbar onwards Mughal coinage will appear to be entirely based on that of the Safavis.<sup>179</sup>

## XI

*Minor Arts*

THE Iranians are by nature skilled and artistic craftsmen with a matchless sense of colour and design, and besides the arts already mentioned they are proficient in stone-cutting, plastering, tile-work, mosaic, gilding and book-binding. Even in Achaemenian times they had attained a high standard of proficiency in the glyptic art. A signet-cylinder of Darius Hystaspes, for example, has the king's name engraved on it in a trilingual inscription. The same king is also represented in his chariot hunting a lion, standing on its hind legs, with the usual sacred figure of the Fravashi floating above. Another cylinder depicts the king, holding the enemy with one hand and piercing him with a spear held in the other.<sup>10</sup>

Even in the hoary past Iran excelled all other nations in ceramics, though in later times it was influenced by Chinese art. R. Ghirshman,<sup>11</sup> the archaeologist, observes: "Nowhere else is a parallel craftsmanship known. ...No other pottery has furnished at so early a date evidence of such vigorous realism passing so rapidly into an abstract style. This was achieved for the first time, about 4000 B.C., by the pre-historic potter of Iran alone." From ancient times Iranian artists excelled in the fictile art, making delightful porcelain vessels, covered over with beautiful designs of animals and birds. The art still flourishes in Iran in all its ancient splendour. The ancient city of Rai near Teherān was famous for its ceramics, but the best specimens of salence in modern times are to be found at Kāshān, otherwise notorious for the vicious variety of its scorpions. The city is so renowned for its pottery that artistic porcelain vessels are named "Kāslū" after it. This art had its influence on Indian craftsmen, particularly during the rule

of the Mughals. The Iranians also made a name for themselves in metal-work, and an Iranian master of this art, Mahmud al Kurdi, who worked in Venice at the beginning of the 16th century, inspired the local craftsmen so that a Perso-Venetian school arose, adopting the pattern of Iranian art to suit the taste of the Italian Renaissance.<sup>182</sup>

The making of textiles in Iran can also be traced to ancient times. The art of weaving carpets, for which Iran has always been celebrated, can be extended to the Achaemenian age, though it reached the pitch of excellence under Sasanian rule. *Iran being a cold country, some covering for the ground may have been considered necessary, and wool is easily available from the large number of sheep tended by the roving tribes.* Even the poorest man in Iran to-day will be found to have a carpet, and he would consider it a dishonour if he were reduced to the necessity of selling it. In fact "selling one's carpet" is in modern Iran considered synonymous with abject poverty. The carpet in the royal Sasanian palace was a marvel and can be definitely said to be unrivalled in beauty and grandeur. It was 450 feet long and 90 feet broad and was prepared in the form of a garden. It was entirely embroidered in gold thread, while the different alleys in the garden were demarcated by lines of silver thread. Emeralds were used to denote the green spots of the garden, while rivulets were indicated by strings of pearls: thus all kinds of gems were freely used to set forth trees, flowers, fruits etc. This carpet was a symbol of the royal pomp and magnificence of the Sasanians.

The conquering Arabs were amazed to see this great carpet which they sent to Khalif 'Umar at Madina. According to the religious law of Islam the booty obtained in war should be divided equally among the Muslims: hence by orders of Khalif 'Umar this unrivalled model of

art was cut up and divided among the Faithful.<sup>183</sup> When the Arabs won the battle of Qudusiya, they captured the "Darfash i Kāvīyāni" or the great national standard of Iran, supposed to have been in existence since the Pishdādian age and embellished with the rarest of gems by successive dynasties. This standard was also unequalled of its kind and it reflected the fondness of Iranian kings for magnificence and display of wealth. It was 18 feet high and 12 feet broad, and a wealth of wonderful gems was profusely lavished upon it. It was also dispatched to Madina to Khalif 'Umar by whose order it shared the fate of the carpet, and every Muslim received a piece by way of booty.<sup>184</sup>

Muslim Iran was true to its national traditions, the greatest carpets, adorned with excellent drawings and embroidered with various colours, being prepared during the Safawi regime. Carpet-weaving thrived under the Qājārs and was also patronized by Reza Shah Pahlavi. It is a truly national industry and a source of national income. Even in modern times the Iranians excel other races in the art of weaving beautiful carpets. According to Sir E. D. Ross,<sup>185</sup> the best specimen of Iranian carpets in the world is at present to be found at Vienna, and from a hunting scene depicted on it it is called the "Hunting Carpet." Other Iranian carpets like the "Ardabil Carpet" and the "Chelsea Carpet" in the Victoria Albert Museum have become world-famous. Sometimes human hands may be found to have the precision and regularity of machines, and it almost staggers our credence when it is asserted that the Ardabil Carpet has more than 30 million knots, 380 to the square inch.<sup>186</sup> Some carpet-weavers are so expert as to do their work with closed eyes. According to Prof. Shustari,<sup>187</sup> the history of Indian carpet industry could be traced to Iranian origin.

The Iranians were also fond of splendid raiment, and even after the Arab conquest the art of preparing beautiful vestments continued. In the court of the Khalif, as among Indian courts, merit was rewarded with turbans and robes of honour, and artistically cut garments were appreciated. According to A. H. Christie,<sup>133</sup> silken garments had been prohibited by the Prophet Muhammad, but the Muslims now encouraged the silk trade and established new silk factories, as proved indirectly by the derivation of the following words:—damask (from Damascus), muslin (from Mosul), baldachin (from Baghdād), taffeta (from the Persian word "tāftan" to twist) and tabby (from 'Attābiyeh, a quarter in Baghdād so named after an Umayyad prince). The manufacture of these textiles, which originated in or were prominently associated with Iran, influenced not only India but various parts of the world, connected with Iran by commercial intercourse.

## XII

### *Gardens*

THE Iranians have as passionate a love for nature as for art; they are always exhilarated by gardens and fascinated by flowers, especially the rose, which so abundantly figures in Persian poetry. Flowers are sold by handfuls for a trifle in the bazars, and according to The Hon. V. Sackville West,<sup>134</sup> the Persians are anxious to decorate their homes even with artificial flowers when real ones become scarce in winter. Fruits also are abundant and of many varieties, and the poor sometimes maintain themselves on nothing else but fruits. The Persian gardener is frequently a Zarathushtrian, and even today in India some of the most extensive garden properties in Gujarat are owned by Irani Zarathushtrians, who drive a prosperous trade by growing and selling



peaches, mangoes etc. Some of the famous gardens of Iran are the Bāgh i Takht near Shirāz, the Bāgh i Shāh 'Abbās at Ashraf in Māzandarān, the Bāgh i Hazār Jarīb and the garden of the royal palace at the Maidān i Shāh near the blue-domed Masjid i Shāh—both in Isphahān.

The Mughals of India have also unmistakably displayed their fascination for and their skill in laying out gardens. Bābar, as we have seen, was a born lover of nature and he bequeathed to his successors his great affection for garden-building. Round Kābul he had laid out the Bāgh i Kilān and the Bāgh i Wafā: in India he completed the Zuhara Bāgh and commenced the Rām Bāgh on the banks of the Jumnā when he died. Akbar grew gardens everywhere, two of them being the Nasim Bāgh and the Shālimār—both in Kashmir. But the epicurean emperor Jahangir's love for gardens mounted to a passion, and he sought to divert his dissipated mind in more legitimate forms of indulgence, as seen in his laying out the Nishāt, Shālimār, Achabal and Vernāg gardens at Kashmir. 'Paradise' and 'Firdaus' literally mean a garden: Kashmir itself is a paradisaical valley, and Jahangir tried to drown the worries of State in this earthly paradise. The loveliest of all was his garden of Shālimār at Kashmir with a background of mountains, commanding a view of the Dāl Lake. Jahangir seemed to be resolved to build gardens wherever he sojourned, and he laid them out also at Lahore, Fatchpur Sikri, Sikandra, Udaipur, Ahmedabad etc. The best garden in the reign of Shah Jahan was the Shālimār, built by his orders by the famous Iranian architect 'Alī Mardānkhān. The art of garden-building continued even in the reign of Aurangzebe who constructed a fair pleasure-ground round the Bādshāhi Mosque at Lahore: his daughter Zaibunnissā laid out the well known Chahār Burji garden in the same city.

The main characteristic of the Persian form of gardening, which came to India with Bābar, was artificial irrigation in the form of channels, basins, or tanks, and dwarf water-falls, so built that the water brimmed to the level of the paths on either side.<sup>190</sup> For instance a constant supply of water was obtained by tapping the river Jumna at a point 70 miles up stream and bringing it by canal to the palaces of the Fort, whence it was conveyed to the gardens. The Persian and Mughal garden was a square or rectangle, encircled by a high wall with serrated battlements, pierced by a lofty gateway. But the heat of India made changes in gardening inevitable, and the main watercourse of the garden had to be widened, sometimes to a breadth of 20 feet or more, as in the Shālīmār Bāgh of Jahangir at Lahore. The Mughals were particularly fond of growing gardens as the setting of the tombs of kings and members of the royal family, as seen in the garden of Akbar's tomb at Secundra. In most gardens the tomb is placed at the centre, but the garden of the Tāj Mahāl differs from other tomb-gardens in having a marble tank in the centre of the plot instead of the tomb, which in this case is situated at the end of the garden, overlooking the river. The art of garden-building proved infectious, and the Mughal courtiers and nobles, animated by the example of royalty, manifested their tastes in laying out elegant gardens on the borders of tanks and rivers. Āsafkhān, the brother of Nur Jahan, for instance, is responsible for laying out the delightful "Bāgh i Nishāt" at Kashmir. Nothing however is so evanescent as gardens, which have to be constantly looked after and which by the neglect of a generation may be transformed into unpleasant eyesores. Thus, whereas the architectural monuments and pictorial and calligraphic relics of the Mughals have survived, most of their gardens have disappeared owing to the tyranny of time and the vicissitudes of fortune.

## XIII

*Music*

Music and poetry can boast of such antiquity as to be called the mother tongue of the human race, and a genial people like the Iranians were bound to be devoted lovers of song. From ancient times Iran had its singers and musicians. The *Gāthās* of Zarathushtra were, as the very name indicates, songs which were chanted in rhythmic tone. The highest heaven of the Zarathushtrians, known as *Garonmāna*, literally means the abode of songs. The lyre, guitar, zither, *chang*, *rin* and other musical instruments were in use among the Sasanians.<sup>191</sup> Musicians were found to regale the guests and play at their banquets. They accompanied the kings to the battlefields and their hunting expeditions. Musicians are sculptured in the hunting scenes of king Khusru Parwiz at Tāq i Bustān. The *Shāhnāmah* from beginning to end rings with the chimes of music, showing how thoroughly it contributed to the joy of Iranian life. According to Mas'udi, quoted by Dr. Dhalla,<sup>192</sup> king Ardshīr Bābkān had made a septenary ministerial division in which the musicians held the fifth place. According to Firdausi, when Behrāmgur visited Shangal, king of Kanouj, the latter, knowing the Iranian monarch's love of song, dispatched with him 12000 Luris or minstrels to Iran, and the place where they settled in that country is called Luristān.

Another royal devotee of music was king Khusru Parwiz, whose court was graced by the most illustrious of Persian musicians, Bārbud, the Tānsen of Iran, who is said to have composed 360 special songs, one to be sung each night to delight his royal master at his sumptuous banquets.<sup>193</sup> Firdausi in the *Shāhnāmah* relates a pleasant story that at first Bārbud was not permitted by the jealous courtiers

to gain access to the monarch. Nothing daunted, Bārbud, clad in green to effectively conceal his presence, hid himself among the branches of a tree on a moonlight night, and when Khusru Parwiz made his appearance in convivial company in the garden, he fascinated the hearts of all by singing three songs in succession. He then manifested himself and was appointed chief court-minstrel by the gratified monarch. It is also on record that Khusru Parwiz had a famous black horse, named Shabdiz, who was such a favourite of his master that the latter had announced that the first who brought to him the news of his death would be slain forthwith. When the animal died, the courtiers found it as impossible to suppress as it was fatal to communicate the news to the capricious potentate. In this quandary all eyes turned to Bārbud, who presented himself before the king and poured forth such a pathetic melody on the philosophy of death as to touch the heart of the monarch, who guessed the end of Shabdiz, though he forbore to inflict any injury on him, who had broken so skilfully the ominous news.

We have seen that the Islamic abhorrence of the human figure in stone was extended by the orthodox to its representation on canvas also. Islam has always taken a puritanical view of games and sports as deflecting the mind from more serious pursuits. The *Qurān* (XXV 72) refers with approval to those who "when they pass by frivolous sport, pass on with dignity." Similarly the orthodox Islamic attitude is none too favourably disposed towards music, which is supposed to distract the devotee's attention from contemplation on spiritual matters. As Maulana Muhammad Ali observes,<sup>194</sup> "The prayer is thus an undisturbed meditation on the Divine, and it is for this reason that in Islam it is not accompanied with music, recitations from the Holy *Qurān*, speaking of divine love, mercy, power

and knowledge, taking its place." It is possible that the denunciation of poets "whom the erring follow" according to the *Qur'ān* XXVI 224 may be due to the Prophet's apprehension that poetry was becoming the popular medium of heathenism, but his dislike for music seems to have been more pronounced. According to a tradition noted by Prof. Hitti,<sup>19</sup> the Prophet is said to have declared the musical instrument to be the devil's muezzin, serving to call men to his worship. Although Islam thus discourages music, this attitude of mind had perforce to be relaxed at the Arabian conquest of Iran. By contact with the Iranians the Arabs, who were themselves devotees of poetry, took to music and song, and many Iranian musical instruments were introduced into Arabia. When 'Abdullāh ibn Zubair wanted to repair the Ka'ba, he hired Persian and Greek workmen who sang as they worked. The lure was irresistible, the Arab heart responded to the emotional call of joy and beauty, and the hills and dales of Arabia overflowed with the strains of music. In later times some of the Sufis were themselves skilled musicians and their mystic creed was sometimes associated with song and even with dancing. Even Indian Muslims have created some master musicians, and it is often the custom to produce the choicest music at the annual *urs* celebrations held at the graves of Muslim saints. Love of music is in fact a boon which God in His kindness has implanted in the human heart, and even the most savage barbarian is often susceptible to musical vibrations.

The origin of music penetrates through history to legend and mythology. It is usual in India to trace all cultural activities to divine sources. The Indians believe that the god Shiva was the first dancer, and Nārada, son of Brahma, the first musician, playing on his *vinā*, the seven-stringed Indian musical instrument. The elements

of Indian music are traceable to the chants of the Sāma Veda, perhaps the oldest musical treatise in the world. The vast popularity of music and dancing in India may be judged from the numerous references to them in the two great Hindu epics as well as in Sanskrit poetry, drama and fiction. An historical instance may be cited of Rājyashri, sister of king Harsha of Kanauj in the 7th century A.D., who was acquainted with all the traditional fine arts and sciences. The "Devadāsīs" (the vestal virgins of India) were expert musicians, associated with temples, but the institution connected with them fell subsequently into disrepute. The subject of music has received thorough and scientific treatment in the numerous volumes that have been written on it, and India did not stand in need of any help from Iran or any other country in that direction. Yet the fact remains that Indian music of the North was considerably influenced by that of Iran through the advent of the Muslims.

Though from ancient times the oneness of India as a vast sub-continent had always been accepted, there has been a difference between the characteristics of the peoples, inhabiting the North and the South. North India was the region of fighting races and large towns; South India was the land of villages, peaceful, conservative and unambitious. This difference was accentuated by the arrival of the Muslims in the North. National traits are bound to assert themselves in art and culture, and it will be noticed that Northern music was more variable, fluid and inclined to transgress the established practice as compared to the Southern type which was more carefully systematized and which erred on the side of rigidity.<sup>196</sup> It was the North Indian type of music that was Persianized and began to be developed in the 14th and 15th centuries under the patronage of Muslim rulers. It was during the Muslim

regime that Persian models began to be introduced into Indian music, thus widening the rift that already existed between Northern and Southern music. Here again we have to turn to the same versatile genius, Amir Khusru, already repeatedly referred to as poet, Sufi, historian and man of letters, attached to the court of Sultān 'Alāuddin Khiljī (early 14th century). It was Amir Khusru who introduced the "*Qawwālī*" by blending Persian and Indian models:<sup>17</sup> he also originated several of our modern *rāgas* (melody-types or melody-moulds). The "*Khayāl*", which belongs to the class of "*Qawwāl*", was also introduced by Amir Khusru.<sup>18</sup> The "*Taffā*" is the typical Muslim song: the "*Dādrā*" is also a Hindustani melody. During his life time Amir Khusru remained unrivalled as a musician. On hearing of his renown, Gopal Naik, a famous musician of the South, came to the Khiljī court and thrilled his hearers by his rapturous songs. But Amir Khusru, who had heard them from his concealment, was able to reproduce and even surpass the tunes which Gopal thought were unknown to all but himself.

In the opinion of H. A. Popley,<sup>19</sup> the resemblance between the musical systems of Persia and India was so considerable as to lead one to the conclusion that there must have been some connection between them. In proof of this inference the same writer has adduced the following illustration. Gāndhāra (the district of Qandahār, adjoining Iran) was in early times a centre of Greco-Indian culture, as the Gāndhāra sculptures testify. Now in the Indian system of music we have a gamut of seven notes, jointly called the "*Saptakā*"—*Sā*, *Rē*, *Gā*, *Mā*, *Pā*, *Dhā*, and *Nī*. In this scale of recognized notes the third note "*Gā*" is of considerable importance and is called "*Gāndhāra*". The fact that one of the important notes of the gamut should have been named after Gāndhāra must be considered

significant, and it reveals Iranian influence working through that district on Indian music. Thus once again Hindus and Muslims joined hands as they did in various other cultural departments—in mysticism, literature, language, architecture and painting. Once again the exotic and the indigenous were blended into a harmony as were Aryan and Dravidian cultures in the ancient history of India. Now Hindu and Muslim musicians entered into a friendly rivalry to outshine each other in song. Religion, often unfortunately misunderstood, may have led to rupture in society, but art, especially music, does not lend itself to such misunderstanding, but wafts the hearers, friendly or hostile, to a higher and better world on the wings of joy and beauty. In fact art in its own way discharges the work of religion, and while religion itself sometimes agitates and ruffles, art invariably softens and pacifies, heals and harmonizes.

The climax of Indian music of the North was reached in the times of Akbar and his two successors, as seen particularly in Beju Bāwṛā, Hardāsji and his famous disciple Tāsen, who were the supreme exponents of Indian music. Akbar was a great lover and patron of music and during his reign Indian rāgas were considerably modified under foreign influence, thus imparting further variety and charm to Northern music, which however diverged still further from the traditional system. The highest summit of Indian music was scaled by Miān Tāsen, almost a fabulous figure, to whom legend has attributed miraculous feats, for instance, igniting lamps and bringing down rain by his music. He was once attached to the Raja of Rewa who was compelled by Akbar to surrender him in 1562. Tāsen was a Hindu convert to Islam and Akbar conferred on him the title of Mirzā in recognition of his unrivalled excellence in music. According to H. A. Popley,<sup>233</sup> Tāsen is credited



with the invention of a new stringed instrument known by the Persian name of "*rubāb*." Legend with its usual loquacity asserts that the leaves of the tamarind tree, overgrowing Tansen's grave at Gwalior, would, if chewed, bestow the gift of a rich, melodious voice on the experimenter. Gwalior can also boast of another great musician and patron of music, Raja Man Singh, the famous Hindu "pillar of the state" in the court of Akbar and the inventor of the "*Dhrupad*" style of singing.

Music as usual was favoured by royalty and Bāz Bahādur of Malwa (himself one of the greatest of singers) and the 'Adil Shāhs of Bijapur were great patrons of the art. Shah Jahan also was a liberal patron of music, and Tansen's son-in-law Lal Khan flourished at his court. Shah Jahan, who could speak Hindi, patronized Hindi poets like Chintāmaṇi and Kavindrāchārya. The great Sanskrit poet, rhetorician and musician Jagannāth was honoured by the emperor with the title of Mahākavirāya. As Sardar K. M. Panikkar<sup>201</sup> observes, the Sultanates of the Deccan maintained an army of musicians, Golconda claiming the almost incredible figure of 20,000. Muslim art and culture have invariably influenced North India more than the South, and in music, as seen above, many new Iranian melodies were introduced during the Mughal regime to enrich the Indian *rāga* system.

The death-knell of Indian music was sounded by Aurangzebe who, if he had his will, would have preferred to rule over a waste land, devoid of sculpture, painting and song. Even music, the most natural and innocent of arts, proved to be a bugbear to his religious susceptibilities, and he created a new department with the express purpose of reducing the number of professional musicians. By his orders his officers broke into houses whence the sound of music was audible and destroyed the instruments

of the performers. A well-known story about Aurangzebe's hatred of music, retailed by Manucci, has found its way in many histories of India. It is said that about a thousand musicians, who had lost their livelihood, once sought to appeal to the man that had no music in himself with a view to persuading him to rescind his order. They therefore approached the royal palace in the form of a funeral procession, carrying a bier, with wild cries of lamentation. The emperor, inquiring about the cause of their grief, was told that music was dead and was being buried. The astute Aurangzebe saw through the device and with grim humour remarked:—"Pray bury her deep so that she may not rise again." It was evidently not possible for the concord of sweet sounds to continue in the regime of a monarch in whose heart its place was occupied by treasons, stratagems and spoils. The slighting remark about music being the least disagreeable of noises may perhaps be tolerated, if the speaker was himself hard of hearing or melancholic in spirit: but the highly cultured Aurangzebe was in full possession of his normal faculties, and his ascetic self-repression, amounting to abhorrence of music, was as tragic as it was incomprehensible. After many dismal years of joyless seclusion the aged emperor sank into his grave, uncomfited by his kith and kin and uncheered by this finest of fine arts.

#### XIV

##### *Indo-Iranian Contacts among Zarathushtrians*

IN surveying the post-Islamic contacts between Iran and India we have so far ignored the Parsis, but the Indian Parsis could not ignore their Iranian co-religionists from whom from time to time they sought guidance and enlightenment. Since the exodus to India there must have

been numerous cases of intercourse between Indian and Iranian Zarathushtrians, as it was impossible for the Parsis to forget their beloved motherland which they were compelled to renounce in critical circumstances. We here note only those important contacts that have been recorded in history. It was the anxiety to preserve their religion from extinction that had driven a large band of Iranian Pilgrim Fathers by sea to Western India. Finding themselves on an alien soil, and being cut off from the land where Zarathushtrianism had originated, the Indian *Dasturs* now saw the necessity of maintaining a regular correspondence with the Iranian priesthood on religious matters. The questions that were asked by Indian *Dasturs* and the answers received from the Iranian high priests are known as "*Rewāyet*".<sup>202</sup> Twenty six of these *Rewāyet*s have come down to us: the first is dated 1478, the 26th and last, known as the "*Itthoter Rewāyet*" (78 questions) was received in India in 1773. Incidentally we come to know of the unenviable plight of Iranian Zarathushtrians from the first *Rewāyat*, in which the Iranian priests declared that never in the history of Iran had harder times been experienced than those through which they were then passing. Their sufferings, said they, were more terrible than those experienced in "the days of Zohāk, Afrāsiyāb, Tur and Sikander". The Parsis had every reason to congratulate themselves for being far better off in the tolerant country of India, where the Hindu rulers never sought to interfere in the religious beliefs and practices of people of other faiths.

It must be admitted, however, that the matter discussed in the *Rewāyet*s does not appeal to the modern Parsi mind. The *Rewāyet*s deal very largely with ceremonial ablutions, purificatory rites, forms of worship and theological disputations, which leave the spiritual aspirant cold and unaffected but which serve to show to what extent Zarathushtrianism

had become ritual-ridden in both countries. This is seen, for instance, in the importance assigned to the consecrated bull's urine and the Iranian disapproval of certain "irreligious" usages prevalent among the Indian Parsis, for instance, the employment of non-Zarathushtrians as corpse-bearers, the use of wooden biers (in place of iron ones) in certain places, and the practice among Parsi women of discarding gloves at meal-times! One of the questions proposed for consideration was whether the Avestan texts could be copied with ink prepared by a non-Zarathushtrian! In the 14th *Rewāyet* we read that the Indian Parsi messenger Behman Asfandiyār, who had proceeded to Iran by sea, was given a purificatory bath called *Barashman* in accordance with the custom then prevalent. In fact the formal prevailed over the spiritual, and as *Dastur* Dr. Dhalla<sup>203</sup> observes: "Bundehishn and Saddar, Jāmāspi and Ardāvīrāfnāmeḥ inspired the clergy and laity in their conduct of life at this period rather than the *Gāthās* and other Avestan works."

But though the *Rewāyets* do not often succeed in expounding the essential principles of the faith, they yet shed valuable light on the history and society of the Zarathushtrians of Iran and India from the 15th to the 18th centuries. We come to know, for instance, the names of certain Parsis of note as well as of Iranian worthies, which would surely have remained wrapped in oblivion, had they not been preserved in the *Rewāyets*. The *Rewāyets* also disclose the chief centres of Parsi settlement in Gujarat, like Surat, Broach, Navsari and Bulsar, as well as the manners and customs of the Parsis of that age and their relations with other communities. The *Rewāyets* also refer *en passant* to certain historic upheavals through which Gujarat passed during those three centuries, and the famines, epidemics and such other natural calamities it had to face. In the

absence of any definite history of the Parsis ever since their advent in India, we must gratefully acknowledge the help, however slight and sporadic, rendered by the *Rewājets* in this direction.

Sometimes the *Rewājets* succeed in unexpectedly illuminating some dark and obscure nook in the history of the Parsis. This is seen in the very first *Rewājet* in which the desired information is brought for the first time from Iran to India in 1478 by an enterprising Zarathushtrian Behdin (layman) named Narimān Hoshang, who was not well acquainted with Persian, but who had picked up a smattering of that language while in Iran, where he maintained himself by selling dates. The replies that he brought from the Dasturs of Yezd were addressed among others to the famous leader of the Parsis of Navsari — Dāvar Chāngā Āshā, referred to in Chapter III. It was this benevolent man who had (at his own expense dispatched Narimān Hoshang to Iran for an elucidation of certain religious problems. It was the same great leader that often came to the help of his co-religionists, and according to R. B. Paymaster,<sup>204</sup> it was through his influence at Delhi that the special tax, which all Parsis were compelled to pay as foreigners, was annulled. As stated in Chapter III, it was this Chāngā Āshā who protected the Parsis, who were homeless fugitives after their defeat at Sanjan, and it was at Chāngā Āshā's private residence that the holy fire was eventually installed at Navsari. Chāngā Āshā's name figures in the first three *Rewājets*, the third *Rewājet* being dated 1511. We may therefore presume that the Parsi leader flourished from c. 1450 to c. 1511.

Now according to the "*Qisseh Sanjān*", the holy fire was transferred to Navsari 26 years after the sack of Sanjān. We have no evidence, except that provided in the *Rewājets*, that may help us to fix Chāngā Āshā's date, and but for

the *Reuāyets* coming to our assistance, our knowledge about these important matters in Parsi history would have remained vague and uncertain. The first three *Reuāyets* enable us therefore to determine not only the life-time of Chāngā Āshā but also the approximate period of the sack of Sanjān and the removal of the sacred fire to Navsari sometime in the last half of the 15th century. Above all the *Reuāyets* are important as documents revealing the post-Muslim contacts of Indian Parsis with their ancient motherland.

The emperor Akbar was an eclectic who cherished reverence for all faiths, but he had a soft corner in his heart for Zarathushtrianism, and *Dastur* Meherji Rāṇā of Navsari c. 1582 had created a very favourable impression about that religion on the royal mind. As is well known, Akbar openly revered the sun and fire, and the courtiers were ordered to rise respectfully when lamps were lighted in the royal palace. But Akbar went still further and offended the religious susceptibilities of the Muslims by abolishing the Hijri era and, in imitation of the Sasanians, introducing a new one, called "Tārikh i Ilāhi" (divine era), beginning from the year of his own accession to the throne. In place of Muslim months there were now substituted the names of Zarathushtrian months from Fravardin to Asfandārmad, as among Sasanian Iran and the Indian Parsis. Fourteen specific Zarathushtrian festivals also took the place of Muslim feasts.<sup>205</sup> All this may doubtless be gall and wormwood to the Muslims of the times, but it serves to show how fascinated an Indian king was by an Iranian faith and its customs.

Akbar was pleased to extend his patronage to Mir Jamāluddin, a Muslim scholar of the times, whose life-work consisted in the compilation of a vast Persian lexicon. Mir Jamāluddin had to deal with many words derived from

Pāzend and Pahlavi, and since there was no one in India to acquaint him with those languages, the emperor specially invited Dastur Ardshir Naushirwān from Kermān in Iran to come to his assistance. The *Dastur* arrived in 1592: the great lexicon appeared in 1608, three years after Akbar's death when Jahangir had succeeded to the throne, and was appropriately named :“Farhang i Jahāngiri”. The assistance rendered by the Iranian Dastur to the Muslim lexicographer was acknowledged by the latter in the Preface of his work.<sup>206</sup> This by the way shows, as did the *Reuāyet*s, that the standard of learning in Pahlavi and Pazend was so poor among the Indian Parsis of the time as to necessitate the assistance of an Iranian scholar at the Mughal court.

We have already considered the names of great Muslim Sufis who from the last years of the 12th century had migrated to India, preached the identity of the human soul with God, and commanded a large following from all communities. Among them may be mentioned the name of a Zarathushtrian mystic, *Dastur Āzar Kaiwān*, who came from Iran and settled in Patna where he died c. 1614, aged 85. His achievements have been recorded in the *Dabistān ul mazāheb* (school of religions) by Muhsin Fāni of the 17th century. Āzar Kaiwān was a vegetarian, living in seclusion and yearning for spiritual union with the Infinite through trance and ecstasy. His philosophy of life will be found in his *Mukāshafāt* (revelations), written in Persian verse. The first 28 years of his life were spent in Iran, where he was regarded as an advanced mystic on the “Bāṭini” (esoteric) stage. He was pre-eminent even as a scholar and was known as “Zul ‘ulum” (master of sciences), though he cared far more for the uplift of his soul than for the cultivation of his mind. Among his Zarathushtrian disciples we find the names of Mobed Farzāneh Behrām

of Shirāz, Sarush, Hushyār and Khudājui, many of whom were authors of mystical works. Āzar Kaiwān's life and outlook, his fasting and seclusion, trance and ecstasy, showed his affinity with Sufism when in Iran and with Hindu mysticism when he came over and settled at Patna, rather than with the principles of Zarathushtrianism. He was however a highly evolved soul who had soared beyond the narrow confines of religious convention and dogma. He deserves an honourable mention here as one of the inestimable gifts bestowed by Iran on India.

Another interesting Iranian, whose name is also memorable in the history of Indian Parsis, connected with Iran, was the learned Mobed Jāmāsp or Jāmāsp Velāyati, who came from Kermān to Surat in 1721. He found the Indian Parsi calendar one month behind that of the Zarathushtrians of Iran. He therefore strongly advocated a reform in the calculation so as to bring the Indian Parsi calendar into line with the one observed by the Zarathushtrians of Iran. The result was a deplorable split in the community: Jāmāsp's followers were called "Qadimis" (ancients or adherents of the ancient mode of calculation), who were opposed to the majority, known as the "Rewājis" or "Shehenshāhis" (traditionalists or imperialists, being adherents of the customary mode of calculation, beginning from the accession to the throne of the last Zarathushtrian king, Yazdegard III). S. H. Hodiwala,<sup>207</sup> however, shows on reliable evidence that the Indian Parsis were already aware of this disparity between the two calendars ever since the 15th *Reuāyet* had reached them from Iran in 1635, but that they were not alive to the urgency of the reform till Mobed Jāmāsp zealously carried on a campaign in the matter in 1721.

In 1768 Dhanjishāh Manjishāh, a Qadimi Zarathushtrian of Surat, sent Dastur Kāoos Rustam Jalāl of Broach



to Iran to investigate into the matter of the reform of the calendar. The Dastur was accompanied by his son Peshotan, who subsequently rose to fame as Dastur Mullā Firuz bin Mullā Kāoos. Father and son carried on researches at Yazd, Kermān, Isphahan, Shirāz etc. and returned to Surat in 1780. The highest ecclesiastical authority in Iran bestowed on Dastur Kāoos the distinguished title of Mulla, rarely awarded to a non-Muslim, in recognition of his vast scholarship. On his return to India he was appointed Head Priest of the Dadabhai Noshervanji Qadimi Fire temple of Bombay.<sup>208</sup> By reason of this Qadimi-Shehenshāhi controversy strong passions were aroused in the community, intemperate language was indulged in, and each party branded the other as heretics.

But although this agitation created bitterness in the community, it was not without its relieving feature. As Dastur Dr. Dhalla<sup>209</sup> observes, this controversy gave a powerful impetus to the Parsis to study their scriptures: their somnolence in matters religious was rudely shaken and they began to pay greater attention to the study of religion than to its ritualistic aspects. Mobed Jāmāsp found the standard of religious learning fairly poor: this missionary thereupon settled down in Gujarat to disseminate religious education, and the *Dasturs* of Surat, Navsari and Broach became his disciples. The most famous among them was Dastur Dārāb of Surat, the teacher of Anquetil du Perron, the intrepid French soldier and enthusiastic scholar, who was among the first to convey the torch of Zarathushtrian learning to the savants of the West in 1771. At the present day, strange to say, times have entirely changed and the situation is completely reversed. Religious scholarship today is at a rather low ebb among the Iranian Zarathushtrians, who are themselves anxious to seek enlightenment from their Indian co-religionists. However, by the patronage

extended to Avestan studies by the liberal-minded monarch Reza Shah Pahlavi and his present worthy successor on the throne, there is every hope that the faith of Zarathushtra will be studied exhaustively and scientifically not only by the Zarathushtrians but even by the Muslims of Iran, who are happily found to take an increasing interest in the primeval religion of their country. Thus this controversy about the calendar also helped to bring the Parsis of India into intimate contact with their co-religionists of Iran.

In the 19th century alarming reports were received by the Indian Parsis about the sufferings and persecutions to which the Zarathushtrians of Iran were subjected during the Qājār regime. Even in progressive countries racial hatred dies hard, and *difference of religion only* serves to give the evil a sharper edge and a longer lease of life. The Parsis were socially and economically far better off in India, and all that they could do for the relief of their Iranian brethren was to send them a noble-hearted missionary whose self-sacrifice and devoted services will for ever remain unforgettably inscribed in their grateful hearts. That person was Maneckji Limji Hoshang Hātariā 1813-1890, who was dispatched by the "Society for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Zarathushtrians in Persia" of Bombay as their agent to Yezd. Hātariā spent his life in Iran, witnessed and personally endured the various forms of persecution inflicted on Zarathushtrians of those days, and ultimately redeemed his down-trodden community from misery and degradation to a life of comparative independence and self-respect. Finding the educational level deplorably low, he spared no pains till schools were established for the enlightenment of his people. By his incentive and initiation fire-temples, caravanserais and *zīāratgāhs* (places of pilgrimage) were either built or renovated, dispensaries opened and relief centres started in times of famine or distress.

Even in the 19th century the Zarathushtrians of Iran, though the true sons of the soil and the inheritors of the ancient religion and culture of their own country, were subjected to irritating vexations and humiliations. They had to put on garments of a certain colour to distinguish themselves from Muslims, to live apart like untouchables in a distinct locality known as "Gabr mohalla" (Parsi quarters), to get down from their horses in case they accosted a Muslim pedestrian, irrespective of the age, merit or status in society of both parties, to build houses low enough for their roofs to be touched by a Muslim hand, and so on. By the constant and indefatigable endeavours of Hātariā some of these provoking and unjust usages were done away with.

But the greatest of Hātariā's services, which entitles him to the eternal gratitude of Iranian Zarathushtrians, consisted in his Herculean and successful attempts for the abolition of the *Jazieh*. This detestable exaction, rendered all the more odious as being demanded by an Islamic government from non-Islamic subjects, was levied on Zarathushtrians by tax-collectors, who were given a free hand in its collection, the result being that the money unscrupulously recovered through insult and indignity was often far in excess of what was determined by the Government. It was through Hātariā's unceasing attempts that arrangements were made for the amount of the tax to be remitted direct from Bombay to the Iranian Government, thus dispensing with the tyranny of the tax-collectors. At last in 1882, eight years before his lamentable death in Iran, Hātariā had the supreme satisfaction of his life when he reaped the reward of his great work in the complete annulment of the *Jazieh*. His memory is enshrined in Iran in many a Zarathushtrian home and institution, adorned by his portrait or bust. Never have the Zarathushtrians of India

sent a greater missionary than Māneckji Hātariā for the amelioration of the lot of their co-religionists of Iran.<sup>210</sup>

Two other Parsis may be referred to here whose names are honoured both in India and in Iran for the services they rendered in their respective spheres and for their attempts at strengthening the bonds between these two countries. Dinshah Jijibhai Irani, Solicitor, of Bombay 1881-1938 was a veritable chip of the old block, being descended from a well-known Iranian ancestor. He was himself a literary man, anthologist and translator of repute. His greatest achievement lay in his discovery of the renowned Iranian scholar and poet Prof. Pour i Dāood, through whom at Irani's initiative the Zarathushtrian scriptures were for the first time translated into Persian. Irani raised a large fund for the purpose, including a handsome contribution from himself. The advantages of this "Authorized Version" of the Zarathushtrian scriptures have been and will henceforth prove to be incalculable. The Zarathushtrian religion, thus worthily brought to the notice of its own adherents and of all Iran, has become the subject of study and research, and slowly but surely it will better the lives of those who choose to profit by it. The death at an early age of this scholar and patriot was an irreparable loss to the Parsis as well as to the people of Iran.

Another great Iranophil, Peshotanji Dosabhai Marker, is still happily amongst us, his silvery hair having failed to chill the ardour always cherished by him to serve the mother-land of his ancestors. He is a philanthropist of renown, having started the "P. D. Marker Zoroastrian Literature Fund," through which the publication of numerous books pertaining to Iran and its ancient faith became possible. He has practically devoted all his wealth to charitable pursuits—to the founding of cosmopolitan schools and orphanages for children of both sexes as well

as the erection of the imposing "Tirdausi Memorial Clock-Tower"—all in Yazd, in a locality that suitably bears the name of "Mārkārābād." The villages adjoining Yazd have also profited by the benefactions of one, who, though not destined to enter the portals of a University, has yet succeeded in making the fruits of education available to Iranian children of all communities in modern times. There is hardly a movement pertaining to Iran which he has not actively sponsored or with which he is not vitally associated. Marker has been honoured by the appreciative Government of Iran with the distinctions of *Nīshān i 'Ilmi*, *Nīshān i Sīfāt* and *Nīshān i Humāyun*; but an unofficial though thoroughly spontaneous honour has been conferred on him by his grateful co-religionists of Iran, who designate him as their "*ruhāni پدر*" (spiritual father). Perhaps no living Indian Parsi commands among the Iranian Zarathushtrians that popularity which this unassuming old gentleman does at the present day. In Marker we thus find a living link of affinity between Iran and India.

## XV

### *Iranian Worthies in India*

TURNING now from the Parsis of India to India in general, we find that the country, particularly the North, has been indebted to Iran in a variety of ways, besides language, literature, mysticism, architecture, painting, music and the industries and amenities of life. According to A. B. Rajput,<sup>211</sup> the Muslim rulers of India began to observe the Iranian festivals of Navruz and Mehrgān. Iranian wines, fruits, viands, dresses and fashions also became popular in India. It was Akbar who started the custom of holding the New Year festival and his own birthday with great pomp and ceremony in imitation of the Iranians. Another custom

be a thorn in the flesh of the envious courtiers. These unworthy persons at last got the ear of the king; an act of the most atrocious treachery was perpetrated, and the king in a fit of drunken revelry ordered the execution of Mahmud Gāwān in his 70th year, without even giving the innocent man an opportunity to plead in self-defence. Such was Gāwān's love of learning and almost injudiciously lavish patronage of scholars that he was actually in straitened circumstances at the time of his death. When the ungrateful king recovered his senses, he fell a victim to grief and was haunted by remorseful dreams: he followed his faithful minister within a twelvemonth, and the kingdom itself crumbled away and was resolved, as stated previously, into five independent sovereignties.

South India had also profited by the services of several other illustrious Iranian noblemen. Nizām ul mulk, founder of the Nizāmshāhī dynasty of Deccan Haiderābād, his well-known father Ghāziuddin Firuz Jang Bahādur (a commander in the army of Aurangzebe) and his father 'Ālam Shaikh (a celebrated scholar-saint of Samarkand) were all of Iranian blood, being descended from the eminent Sufi Shaikh Shahābuddin Sahrwardī (the spiritual preceptor of S'adi).<sup>217</sup>

From the 16th to the 18th centuries Iran gave India not only her poets, men of letters and saints but also her statesmen, public workers and other worthies. Rustam Mirzā, grandson of Shah Ism'ail Safawi of Iran, had come over to India and was a general in the army of Akbar. In the beginning of his reign Akbar was considerably under the influence of the Iranian Sufi 'Abdul Latīf,<sup>218</sup> who instilled in his youthful mind a love of all faiths, which bore ample fruit in the religious discussions held later between champions of various faiths at the 'Ibādatkhāneh (house of worship) at Fatehpur Sikri. Hakim Abul Fath,

Hakim Hamām and Hakim Nuruddin were Iranians who came to India and held honoured posts as physicians and commanders in the reign of Akbar.

The early history of Nur Jahan reads like a romance. She was of noble Iranian stock but her parents, reduced to extreme poverty, sought to repair their fortunes by emigrating to India. It was in India that this girl of matchless beauty was born under very distressing circumstances, and was named Meherunnissā, though she won renown by the title of Nur Jahan. Her beauty proved to be both a bane and a blessing: the story of her marriage with Sher Afgan and subsequently with Jahangir is too well known to be narrated here. Nur Jahan was also endowed with intelligence, pluck and force of will, which were revealed in her administration of the State when Jahangir had latterly lapsed into imbecility as a helpless victim of the wine-cup. Her father Ghayāthbeg 'Aitimāduddaula and her brother, Āsafkhān, who held responsible posts in the kingdom, had great influence over Jahangir, and the Persia-nization of his court was largely due to the vigorous activities of the queen and her kinsmen.

The magnificence of the Mughal court and the lavish patronage of the emperors did not fail to attract some of the best minds of Iran to seek service here in various capacities. Nawāb Zafarkhān Ahsan migrated from Iran and held the post of a minister in the reigns of Jahangir and Shah Jahan. His services were considered so indispensable that once when Zafarkhān thought of retirement the emperor Shah Jahan personally went over to Lahore and persuaded him to continue.<sup>219</sup> Zafarkhān was an illustrious patron of letters, being considered second only to 'Abd ur Rahim Khānkhānān in this respect. It was Zafarkhān who brought the famous poet Saib from Iran to India. 'Alimardānkhān was a Persian general and artistic designer of various public

works in the times of Shah Jahan, such as the Shālīmār gardens at Lahore and the great canal near Delhi. In the train of 'Alimardānkhān came another Persian, Murshid Qulikhān Khorāsāni, a brave and capable administrator in the court of Shah Jahan. Sarmad, the Sufi preceptor of Dārā Shikuh, Ruhallāh, the finance minister of Aurangzebe, Mir Jumla, the famous general and right-hand man of Aurangzebe, the capable officer and poet 'Āqilkhan in the reign of the same emperor, and numerous other worthies had migrated from Iran to offer their services to India.<sup>220</sup>

A melancholy interest attaches to the name of Shaikh Muhammadali Hazin 1692-1779, who was compelled to leave Iran in 1734 when it was terrorized and ruled over by the Afghans from 1720 to 1736. He fled to India where he wrote his memoirs, known as the *Tazkarat ul ahwāl*. He had a deep dislike for Indian manners and customs though he was destined to spend the remaining 45 years of his long life in India. He settled at Benares and his long stay there must have gradually worn off his repugnance and converted his aversion into approbation as evidenced from his following lines:—

"*Az Benāres naraṭam, ma'abad i 'āmast injē:  
Har Barhaman pīsari Lachman o Rāmast injā:*"

(I will not leave Benares; it is a place of public worship: every Brahmin lad here is named either Lakshman or Rāma).

H. Beveridge<sup>221</sup> refers to the Parsis as a gift of Iran to India. In the opinion of this writer the Parsis have served India as devotedly as the English Puritans served America, where they fled in 1620 to escape the results of the religious policy of James I, or as the Huguenots served England and other countries when they escaped in 1685



from the dragonnade of Louis XIV.<sup>222</sup> But it must not be forgotten that another "gift" from Iran to India was the terrible Nādir Shah who in 1739 during the reign of the Mughal king Muhammadshāh swooped down on India, deluged the streets of Delhi with blood and returned with a vast booty including the Kuli i noor diamond and the Peacock Throne. But on the whole it is indisputable that India, and particularly Muslim India, has been considerably indebted to Iran not only in culture in general but in the various other departments of life.

Though in the tottering Mughal regime of the 19th century the influence of the Persian language in India was definitely on the wane, it had not wholly declined. Literature in Iran itself was now undergoing a rapid and radical change. The credit of revolutionizing the spirit of Persian literature must largely be assigned to the journalism of the second half of the 19th century in Iran. This provoked a suitable response in India also: some Persian newspapers were published in Calcutta, the then capital of the country, the best being the *Habl ul matn* (firm cord), edited by Sayyad Jalāluddin of Kāshān. A weekly Persian newspaper *Mufarrik ul qulub* (exhilaration of hearts), edited by Mirzā Muhammad J'afar was published for 30 years at Karachi. It was supported by the rulers and nobility of Iran and Turkey and was said to be the best Persian newspaper in India.<sup>223</sup>

In the nineteenth century we come across a well-known Islamic reformer Hazrat Mirzā Ghulām Ahmad Qādīni (1836-1908), who in 1889 founded the Ahmadiyya movement, which in spite of violent opposition and persecution, captured the devotion of over half a million followers in and out of India.<sup>224</sup> This movement, which was started at Qādīn, a small town in the Panjab, aimed at purifying and in some cases re-interpreting the religion of Islam. It is

noteworthy that the founder, who also claimed to be the Promised Messiah, whose advent had been prophesied in the various faiths, was of Iranian descent and belonged to a noble and ancient Mughal family, which had migrated from Samargand and settled in the Panjab during the reign of Babar.

Among the Iranian worthies who had settled in India in modern times mention must be made of the colourful figure of His late Highness Sir Sultan Muhammad Shah, Aga Khan III 1877-1957, who was the 48th Imām (spiritual leader) of more than fifty million Isma'ili Shi'a Muslims of India and of various other parts of the world. According to Prof. Browne,<sup>225</sup> he was a lineal descendant of Ruknuddin Khurshāh, the last Grand Master of the Isma'ilis in the chain of succession to Hasan i Sabbāh, the formidable Old Man of the Mountain. This Ruknuddin Khurshāh himself claimed descent from Isma'il,<sup>226</sup> the seventh Imām who was the great-great-great grandson of Hazrat 'Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad. Besides being the direct descendant of the Arabian Prophet the late Aga Khan also claimed descent from the Fātimide Khalifs of Egypt. But what concerns us here is that the Aga Khan was a Persian, related to the ruling Qājār dynasty. His paternal grandfather Aga Khan I was the son-in-law of king Fath 'Ali Shāh Qājār,<sup>227</sup> but owing to the internecine war that broke out after that monarch's demise, Aga Khan I left Iran for good and migrated to Baluchistan and Sindh and finally to India, where his late grandson was destined to play such a conspicuous part. The late Aga Khan III was a truly cosmopolitan figure: still he was always proud of his Persian origin and of the cultural heritage he had derived from Iran.

The last noteworthy Iranian, who served as a link between the two countries, was Sir Mirzā Isma'il 1883-1959,

a staunch son of Iran and devoted servant of India. His grandfather 'Ali 'Askar migrated from Shirāz to India, and Sir Mirzā, who was born and brought up at Bangalore, had thoroughly identified himself with the Indian people and their interests. He was an ardent advocate of Hindu-Muslim unity, and had proved himself one of the finest administrative brains in modern India. As the Iranian statesman Mahmud Gāwān whole-heartedly served the Bāhmani dynasty, Sir Mirzā rendered illustrious services as Divan of Mysore and Jaipur, which will long continue to cherish the memory of his efficient rule and far-sighted policy.<sup>228</sup> The long connection between Iran and India may be said to cease temporarily with Sir Mirzā's worthy name, for the chain is endless and finality is foreign to art and culture as well as to public and political life.

## XVI

### *Finale*

It is usual to end a work with pious hopes founded on an optimistic outlook, but the state of affairs at the present day can scarcely justify the golden dreams of a promising future. It is deplorable to have to state here that owing to a certain political crisis, which might well have been averted in a country more unified and less communal-minded than ours, the harmonious cultural relations between India and Iran are likely to suffer a severe set-back in future in spite of all the good-will and cordiality that prevail between the two countries. After the attainment of political emancipation by India the study of Sanskrit and the regional languages, based largely on Sanskrit, naturally received a great impetus from the Government, causing an alarming decline in the number of students of Persian in our

country. This fall was further precipitated by the simultaneous partition of India and the formation of Pakistan, which encouraged intellectual pursuits in Persian and Urdu and thus attracted to itself some eminent Persian scholars and poets from India. Thus in India today Persian declines but gains ground in the neighbouring kingdom of Pakistan, once a part of India itself. Still in certain Indian centres of learning like Aligarh, Lucknow, Haiderabad (Deccan) etc. the flag is still kept flying, and it is hoped that cultural contacts with Iran will vigorously continue from those centres with all the means of learning and research available in the twentieth century.

The Parsis, it is true, cannot afford to give up the study of their ancient tongue, the language of the *Shāhnāmah*, which is the greatest cultural thesaurus they possess; and yet, for the reasons stated above, it is tragic to behold the great ancestral mansion of Persian learning, raised by many a devoted and scholarly hand, crumbling before our eyes through a natural diminution in the number of students, who can hardly be blamed under the circumstances. The creation of Pakistan may not be considered unavoidable, but the educational changes, following in the wake of our national freedom, seem to be as overwhelming as they are inevitable. Students who take up Persian to-day in schools as their second language find themselves completely at sea in colleges, where lectures are delivered even on technical subjects like Logic and Economics in the regional languages, which they could have followed far more intelligently had they been grounded in Sanskrit from the beginning. Thus though the past had been brilliant and promising, the future is depressing and dreary. The Parsis had kept up their contact with Persian ever since their arrival in India, but coming generations cannot for sentimental reasons be persuaded to relinquish the advantages of swimming with

the tide and taking up Sanskrit, in which there are far better prospects of thriving in life. There are today Indian advocates even of English, practically the *lingua franca* of the world and the medium of communication between cultured Indians of all provinces at the present day. But for what cogent reasons can we espouse the cause of Persian, which has had a glorious career in the past under Muslim rule and has now by sheer stress of circumstances entered upon her decline?

But a ray of hope still glimmers on the horizon. The mother-tongue of Indian Muslims is Urdu, for an adequate study of which a sound knowledge of Persian and Arabic is necessary: and it may be expected that for the development and growth of Urdu the study of Persian will be continued by the Muslims enthusiastically though not under the same favourable circumstances as when they governed the destinies of this country. We also nurse the unconquerable hope that there will always be a minority of devoted souls among the Parsis who will pursue learning for learning's sake and not for worldly emolument, and cleave to their ancestral Persian language as a duty, as they cleave to Avesta and Pahlavi, even though the market-value of these languages be negligible. Any way, even if the intellectual ties between Iran and India are relaxed in future, it may legitimately be hoped that the political contacts between the two countries will ever continue to be harmonious, sweetened and strengthened by many a happy memory of their mutual cultural interrelations in the past.

We have now attempted a survey of the close connection between Iran and India from hoary antiquity to modern times. Their mutual relations, cordial or hostile, have been referred to in their ancient religious works. Their connection is evident in mythology, legend, poetry, drama and fiction, and from the conquest of North India by

the Iranian king Darius Hystaspes in 512 B.C. begins their historical contact, which may have been interrupted but which still continues unbroken throughout the ages. But the most intimate of all contacts is that established by literature, art and culture which have always harmonized the relations between these two countries, apparently different in language and religion and yet inherently one in the cultural values of life, that go to establish an abiding kingdom of peace in the world, wherever they are genuinely recognized. So intimate is this connection between Iran and India that as Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru<sup>229</sup> has well and truly observed: "Few people have been more closely related in origin and throughout history than the people of India and the people of Iran."

But Iran has not only influenced India but the various nations of the world during its long and chequered history. It is not within the scope of this volume to dwell on Iran's influence on the various countries of the world,<sup>230</sup> but it can be shown that Iran by her geographical position, by her conquests and even by her calamities, by her inherent and unyielding pride as a nation, by the adaptable nature of her people and their assimilative habits, and above all by her inborn love of culture, has ever secured a prominent rank in the annals of the numerous nations with which she has come into contact. Even if, God forbid, Iran ceases to exist, the chronicles of the various countries will still continue with myriad tongues to celebrate her services, rendered in different quarters of the globe, and the various nations, influenced by or indebted to her, will resuscitate her from her ashes as the undying Light that had once irradiated the world. T. R. Glover<sup>231</sup> does no more than pay a well-deserved tribute to the greatness of Iran when he observes:- "So far as history is as yet unfolded, no other Eastern people, apart from the Jews, has meant so

much to the West or has taken so large a part in shaping the civilization and thought of mankind."

India can similarly raise her head high among the nations for the cultural heritage she has derived from times immemorial. It makes an Indian proud to read any of the numerous works produced on Ancient Indian Culture, particularly after 1947, and to realize that he belongs to a country which in philosophy and mysticism can easily overtop the speculative heights reached by any other nation, and which in poetry and literature, both secular and spiritual, in architecture, painting, dance and music is second to none in the unique contribution it makes to the culture of the world. It is true however that India lighted its candle and put it under a bushel: the Indians were too other-worldly to advertize their wares, and, except the Buddhists, there were not many Indians anxious to disseminate their intellectual stores among the nations. Instead of the Indians going out into the world, the world had to send to India its scholars, pilgrims, travellers and ambassadors who were not slow to appreciate the cultural wealth that was the true glory of this country. History has shown time and again that India is one of the most tolerant of nations, tolerant to all except perhaps to the "Depressed classes" of her own people. It is paradoxical that though the Indians were found to be socially exclusive, their culture, like any true culture anywhere, should have been catholic and all-comprehensive. To-day, however, India is shedding its ancient spirit of exclusiveness and is rapidly cultivating a genuinely cosmopolitan outlook.

The true unity between countries is not achieved permanently through political protocols or economic negotiations but through cultural and intellectual connections. What is wanted is not a temporary cessation of hostilities, wherein the embers of mutual hatred and suspicion lie smouldering

under the ashes of an ostensible peace. What is needed is rather an adequate understanding between nations, arrived at through cultural contacts, leading to agreement of minds and adjustment of differences and paving the way for a more enduring harmony. The political history of two countries, dwelling on wars and victories, defeats and humiliations, may end in creating a lasting animosity which can effectively be healed by a cultural history which attempts to emphasize their underlying harmony by a study of their religion and philosophy, literature and art. If history is the biography, literature is said to be the autobiography of a nation, acquainting us with its essential inner life, its aims and ideals, its hopes and aspirations, its perplexities and problems. An impartial and sympathetic cultural approach to that nation would go far to enable us to understand its peculiar traits and outlook on life. We are then in a position to realize how far we are in agreement with the nation, and how far, in case of disagreement, we can account for what appears to us its oddities and inexplicable activities.

The two diseases of modern civilization, the one presupposing the other, are megalomania on the one hand and xenophobia on the other. Both are as old as the hills and both are responsible for the wave of cold war which sweeps over the world at present. Their speedy extinction is a foregone conclusion because their very existence to-day is unaccountable in the face of modern trends of science, which abbreviates time and space and brings the far-flung countries of the world into a close and compact comity of nations. It is through a study of international culture in the widest sense of the term that we can hope to approach the ideals of a World-Encyclopaedia and World-Brain, the necessary stepping-stones to World-Peace, visualized as the achievement of the near future by H. G. Wells,<sup>232</sup> the secular prophet of a scientific age. It is to be hoped that



the present volume which modestly attempts to emphasize the cultural values and indicate the essential oneness of Iran and India through the ages, will succeed to a measurable extent in promoting understanding and goodwill between the two countries, and thus enable them not only to forge the bonds of lasting harmony and friendliness among themselves, but to kindle a beacon of hope in a benighted world, which constantly prepares for war and is yet sincerely yearning for peace. *Pāyandāh k̄d Irān o Hind*. Long live Iran and India!

## NOTES

- 1 *Vision of India* by Sisirkumar Mitra
- 2 *Al Fāroq* (Life of Khalif 'Umar I) by Maulānā Shibli N'omāni (Urdu)
- 3 *History of the Arabs* by Prof. P. K. Hitti
- 4 *Cultural Relations between India and Jara* by Dr. A. J. Bernet Kerapars
- 5 Dr. Majmudar's article "Cultural Influence Abroad in Early Times and Reflex Influence", contributed to *An Outline of the Cultural History of India*, edited by Dr. Sayyad 'Abdul Latif
- 6 *'Arab o Hind k̄ ta'alluqāt* by Sayyad Sulaimān Nadvi (Urdu)
- 7 Ibn Sa'id Maghribi was an Egyptian of the 12th century who wrote on the geography of Western India. More prominent than him was the renowned traveller and historian Ibn Batuta of Morocco, who in his *Safarnāmah* (book of travels) has shed valuable light on Indian life and conditions during the reign of Muhammad Taghlaq in the 14th century. These two writers, being non-Iranians,

could not be included in the text of a work, which proposes to dwell on Indo-Iranian contacts only.

8 *Rauābet i adabi i Irān o Hind* (Cultural contacts between Iran and India) by Mr. Ali Akbar Shahābi (Persian)

9 For a detailed examination of this anomaly and its causes *vide*, *Iran and its Culture* by Firoze C. Davar

10 *Op. cit.*

11 *Op. cit.*

12 *Op. cit.*

13 According to Dr. R. C. Majmudar, Sushrut flourished earlier than the 4th century A.D.

14 *Vide*, *History of India as told by its own Historians* by Elliot and Dowson: Vol. V: Appendix.

15 *Vide*, *Mahāmahopādhyāya Pandit Ganganath Jha Commemoration Volume*: article by Dr. M. G. Zubaid Ahmed on "Contribution of India to Arabic Literature during the pre-Ghaznavid period."

16 *History of Sanskrit Literature* by A. A. Macdonell

17 *Op. cit.*

18 *Op. cit.*

19 *Vide*, *Mahāmahopādhyāya Pandit Ganganath Jha Commemoration Volume*: article by Dr. M. G. Zubaid Ahmed on "Contribution of India to Arabic Literature during the pre-Ghaznavid period."

20 Ibn Nadim (10th century) in his *Fihrist* refers to a Sanskrit work on alchemy which was translated into Arabic. The names of the book, author, translator as well as the dates of composition and translation all remain unknown. Ibn Nadim in the same work also alludes to another Sanskrit work on logic which was translated under the caption *Kitāb i hudud i mantiq al Hind* (book dealing with the limits of Indian logic). Here also Ibn Nadim is silent about the names of the original author and translator.

Indians were usually regarded experts in magic, *naẓarbandi* (bewitchment), charms and amulets. Even on these subjects Ibn Nadim gives us no further information beyond the fact that an Indian work on mesmerism had been translated into Arabic. Sayyad S. Nadvi refers to the Arabic translation of a work by an Indian politician Vyāghar, but the name of his book and the date cannot be established. He also makes mention of a Sanskrit work of unknown name and authorship which was translated under the caption of *Nishānāt i adab ul mulk* (traces of national culture). The information about all these works, even when not unauthentic, was found insufficient and could not therefore be incorporated in the text.

21 *Vide* his Chapter I in *Struggle for Empire in History and Culture of the Indian People* (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Series).

22 *Op. cit.*

23 *Albiruni—A Life Sketch*—by the Rev. Father V. Courtois S. J.

24 *History of India as told by its own Historians* by Elliot and Dowson

25 *Vide* "Impact of Muslim culture", being Prof. 'Abdul Majid Bukhārī's contribution to *An Outline of the Cultural History of India* edited by Dr. Sayyad 'Abd al Latif

26 *History of India as told by its own Historians* by Elliot and Dowson

27 *Vide* "Indo-Persian Literature in Mediaeval India", being Prof. Sayyad 'Abdul Wahhāb Bukhārī's contribution to *An Outline of the Cultural History of India*, edited by Dr. Sayyad 'Abdul Latif

28 *The Legacy of Persia* edited by Prof. A. J. Arberry

29 *Rewābet i adabi i Irān wa Hind* (Cultural Contacts between Iran and India) by 'Ali Akbar Shahābi (Persian)

30 Prof. Sa'id Nafisi's Persian article in *Indo-Iranica* (June 1959) — "Rawābet i adabi i Irān wa Hind dar qurun i wustā" (cultural contacts between Iran and India in the Middle Ages).

31 *Vide* "Rise of a New Mixed Language", being Padma Bhushan Dr. Sayyad 'Ābid Husain's contribution to *An Outline of the Cultural History of India* edited by Dr. Sayyad 'Abdul Latif

32 *Akbar, the Great Mogul* by Vincent A. Smith

33 "Rise of a New Mixed Language", being Padma Bhushan Dr. Sayyad 'Ābid Husain's contribution to *An Outline of the Cultural History of India*, edited by Dr. Sayyad 'Abdul Latif

34 *Outline of Islamic Culture* by Prof. A. M. A. Shustari, Vol. I

35 The Arabic script had been similarly adopted in the Iranian language, when Persian began to emerge from Fāzand two centuries after the Arab conquest. After the Arab conquest of Spain also the Spanish language came to be written in the Arabic script. By the infusion of Arabic into Spain, the Spanish language became about 25 per cent mixed with Arabic, and even at present contains hundreds of Arabic words.

36 *Vide Mahāmahopādhyāya Pandit Ganganath Jha Commemoration Volume*: article on "Tuhfat al Hind" or Aurangzebe's Interest in Indian Literature by Sayyad Mas'ud Hasan Razavi, who quotes the names of 16 such Hindi works, written in Arabic script.

37 *India Through the Ages* by Sir J. N. Sarkar

38 *History of Urdu Literature* by Rambabu Saksena

39 Quoted in *Mediaeval India* by Stanley Lane Poole

40 *Vide, Gujarātīoṇi lakhelā Fārsi grantho* (Persian works by Gujarati authors) by Diwan Bahadur Krishnalal M. Jhaveri (Gujarati)

41 *History of Shah Jahan of Delhi* by Benarasiprasad Saksena

42 *History of Urdu Literature* by Rambabu Saksena

43 Quoted in *Survey of Indian History* by Sardar K. M. Panikkar

44 *Ibid.*

45 "Mughal" and "Mongol" are not different, the former being the Arabic spelling of the latter

46 *Vide* "Impact of Muslim Culture" being Prof. 'Abdul Majid Siddiqi's contribution to *An Outline of the Cultural History of India*, edited by Dr. Sayyad 'Abdul Latif

47 *A Literary History of Persia* Vol. II by Prof. E. G. Browne

48 *Ibid.*

49 Dr. M. W. Mirzā's contribution in "Struggle for Empire" in *History and Culture of the Indian People* (Bhāratiya Vidyā Bhavan Series)

50 Ratnamānirao Bhimrao in his Gujarati work *Somnāth* considers this episode fictitious. For an elaborate discussion of this subject, *vide* Maulānā Sayyad Abuzafar Nadvi's Urdu work on the history of Gujarat, translated into Gujarati by Dr. C. R. Naik

51 *Op. cit.*

52 *Vide* his Persian article in *Indo-Iranica* (June 1959) on "Rawābet i adabi i Iran wa Hind dar qurun i wustā" (cultural contacts between Iran and India in the Middle Ages)

53 In the opinion of some scholars, however, the *Khāliq bārī* is a forgery of the early 17th century, falsely attributed to Amir Khusru

54 *Hazrat Amir Khusru of Delhi* by Prof. Muhammad Habib

55 Quoted from *An Advanced History of India* by R. C. Majumdar, H. C. Raychaudhari and K. Dutta

56 *Vide*, *The Crescent in India* by S. R. Sharma

57 *Vide* "Indo-Persian Literature in Mediaeval India", being Prof. Sayyad 'Abdul Wahhāb Bukhārī's contribution to *An Outline of the Cultural History of India*, edited by Dr. Sayyad 'Abdul Latif

58 *Ibid.*

59 *Persian Literature under Tartar Dominion* by Prof. E. G. Browne

60 *Ibid.*

61 *Ibid.*

62 *Rawābet i adabi i Irān wa Hind* (Cultural Contacts between Iran and India) by 'Ali Akbar Shahābi (Persian)

63 *Life of Bābar* by Stanley Lane-Poole

64 *History of Persian Literature in Modern Times 1500-1924* by Prof. E. G. Browne

65 *Rawābet i adabi i Irān wa Hind* (Cultural Contacts between Iran and India) by 'Ali Akbar Shahābi (Persian)

66 *History of Persian Literature in Modern Times 1500-1924* by Prof. E. G. Browne

67 "Indo-Persian Literature in Mediaeval India", being Prof. Sayyad 'Abdul Wahhāb Bukhārī's contribution to *An Outline of the Cultural History of India*, edited by Dr. Sayyad 'Abdul Latif

68 *Shi'r ul 'Ajam* (Poetry of Persia) by Shams ul 'ulamā Maulānā Shibli No'māni (Urdu)

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83 *Ibid.*

84 According to the Abjad mode of computation every letter in the alphabet has a fixed value. To celebrate an event a poet may compose a cleverly-worded chronogram, whose letters, when added up, denote the year of the occurrence or achievement. In the present case the letters, composing the words 'Hind' and 'Jahān', yield the same number (59), revealing the pointedness and ingenuity of the poet's reply.

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98 The following reference to Nāvbahār can be discovered in the *Shāhnāmeh* of Firdausi:

"Chun Gushtāsp rā dād Lohrāsp takht,  
Farud āmad az takht o bar bast rakht:  
Ba Balkh i guzin shud bar ān Nāvbahār,  
Ke Yazdānparastān i ān ruḡār  
Marān khāneh rā dāshtandi chunān  
Chun mar Makkeh rā in zamān Tāziyān":

[When Lohrāsp entrusted the sovereignty to (his son) Gushtāsp, he came down from the throne and packed up his belongings (for a life of seclusion). Lohrāsp confined himself to the temple of Nāvbahār in the chosen city of Balkh; this temple was held in as much veneration by the godly people of those days as Mecca is held today by the Arabs.]

By thus confusing the Balkh of the pre-historic times of the Kayāni king Gushtāsp with the Balkh of the days subsequent to the Arab conquest, and by relegating the



Buddhist monastery of Navbahār to the days of Gushtāsp and his contemporary Zarathushtra, Firdausi has unwittingly considered these two personages as posterior to Buddha—a grievous anachronism. Such lapses in chronology are unhappily not very infrequent in the *Shāhnāmeh*.

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102 Such a forty-days' course of spiritual purification is called *chilla*

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107 *Ibid.*

108 *Ibid.*

109 *Ibid.*

110 *Ibid.*

111 *Gujarāt nu Pātnagar — Amdāvād* (Ahmedabad, the capital of Gujarat) by Ratnamanīrao Bhimrao (Gujarati)

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- 125 *Ibid.*
- 126 Ghazni is the Indian spelling of the word: in Persian it is Ghazmain, in Arabic it is Ghaznā. (*Vide, Mediaeval India under Muslim Rule* by Stanley Lane Poole)
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227 *Memoirs of Aga Khan* by Aga Khan III with a Foreword by Somerset Maugham

228 *My Public Life* by Sir Mirza Ismail

229 *The Discovery of India* by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

230 For an exhaustive survey of this question Cf., *Iran and its Culture* by Firoze C. Davar

231 *From Pericles to Philip* by T. R. Glover

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